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March 2016

China in your hand



China is breaking big and bad. It is only a matter of time before the smartphone giant Xiaomi plants its flag on European soil. Then you will see grown men at Mobile World Congress cry. You may not have heard of Xiaomi. But you will, you will. Set up in seven years ago as a small start-up to sell cheap designer phones online, Xiaomi soon became the preferred mobile of choice among Chinese youth. The Chinese buy around 550 million smartphones a year. And Xiaomi is now the top brand. The sales numbers are barely imaginable. So it is no wonder that Xiaomi now has the financial clout to bring its brand to the rest of the world and become the world's top phone manufacturer. Mobile World Congress next year will be an entirely different place!

Apple's smash and grab

If you've purchased an iPad Air or an iPad Pro, make sure you have a good gadget insurance policy. Or several hundred spare pounds in your bank account. Why? Because if you crack the glass on your iPad Air Apple will require £285 to replace it. If the iPad Air hits the concrete you'll be looking at £485 for a replacement screen. Those figures are not misprints. Previous iPads cost around £75 for a screen repair. But in its obsession with thinness Apple has fused various panels into one slice. So a breakage will break the bank. Fortunately there are some independent repairers who will do the job for less. We managed to save £100 by sending our broken Air to Quick Fix Mobile, which did a perfect repair for £185. Unfortunately this means it has come out of warranty. Our advice. Get covered. Or get an Android.

The What Mobile team



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The guys over at Steelseries have been kind enough to gift us a brand new Bluetooth controller, which we reviewed in last month's accessories round-up and gave a very impressive four stars. To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is answer the simple question below:

What operating systems is the Stratus XL compatible with?

- A. Android and iOS**
- B. Android and Windows**
- C. iOS and Windows**

Email your full name, address, contact number and answer to the address below:

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Alternatively, head to:
www.whatmobile.net/competition
and fill in the online form.

The winner will be contacted via email on the 10 March 2016.

Sweating the small stuff: 1. The promoter of this competition is Clark White Publishing Ltd. 2. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 years or over, excluding employees of What Mobile, all participating companies, its agents or families and any company associated with this competition. 3. By entering, all entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules. 4. All entry instructions form a part of the terms and conditions. 5. Closing date: 10 March 2016. 6. Only one entry per email/IP address will be accepted. 7. The correct winning entry will be selected randomly by the administrator of the What Mobile Facebook page. The winner, who must be a UK resident, will be sent a PNY PowerPack. 8. No cash alternative or other device will be offered. 9. No correspondence will be entered into except that the name of the winner will be available upon written request. 10. You accept that the competition prize may be an open box item that was previously reviewed in the magazine by one of our reporters.

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MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS

Mobile World Congress, the biggest smartphone event of the year, is just around the corner. Every year, the best of the best congregate in Barcelona to announce new handsets and unleash their newest flagships. That said, it is also a good place for smaller manufacturers to show their worth and unveil some impressive devices too. This year's event looks set to be a cracker indeed, with several of the big manufactures eagerly awaiting the chance to pull back the velvet cloth and unleash the past years' work. Here's a rundown of what we're expecting at MWC 2016:



Battery innovation

Battery capacity is going to be a very big deal at MWC this year, with Oppo already poised to show off a 'ground-breaking power solution'. We've been waiting so long for an innovation in battery technology and with so many low-key tests now starting to pay off, this could be our year. We could see a shift to smaller, slimmer batteries or phones becoming thicker in general to accommodate more juice.



Bendable screens

Bendable tech was shown off quite heavily last year, albeit in a very early way. The potential was definitely there and it is safe to say that we should be seeing some more mature versions of the technology debuting at this year's MWC from big players such as LG and Samsung.



5G

With a highly detailed schedule planned for 5G over the next four years, you can guarantee that there will be plenty of debate at MWC regarding the next generation of mobile spectrum. A three-phase step said to be completed by 2020 will rejuvenate the European cellular network and provide speeds which could be defined as 20 Gbps.



Smartwatches

Wearables are fast becoming a mature technology that companies are perfecting in design and performance. After the explosion of new wearables that debuted at last year's IFA, we should expect to see a lot more refined designs which definitely focus on the fashionable side of things. Also expect a lot of collaborations between big fashion firms and smartwatch manufacturers in an effort to market them a bit more effectively.



Virtual reality

VR is going to show up in some shape or form, especially with companies such as Samsung enjoying relative success with their own VR handset peripherals. HTC is taking to the fight with its own implementation, the HTC Vive, and it is inevitable that some of the new VR tech will be powered or integrated into smartphone handsets.

1 BlackBerry

BlackBerry has kept itself pretty tight-lipped on what it is bringing to MWC, though rumours suggest that the company will not be introducing any new BB10 devices and will instead continue its focus on the Android OS. After the relatively positive success of the Priv, we can only say that it seems like a clever idea for it to do so.



2 SAMSUNG

There's been plenty of rumours regarding Samsung these past few months and it is clear that the company is gearing up for a launch of the S7. Hardware rumours are pretty sporadic at the moment, though the most recent seem to suggest a Snapdragon 820, 4GB RAM and a 1440p screen.

3 Xiaomi

It's taken what felt like an eternity but we should be expecting Xiaomi to give us a hands-on glimpse of the Mi5 this year at MWC. We've already had leaks showing the retail box and proposed design style, which gives nod to the Samsung Galaxy S series. Internally, you've got Qualcomm's newest Snapdragon 820 and what's likely to be Android 6.0 with the MIUI skin.



4 htc

While the Taiwanese smartphone giant has been struggling heavily over the past year or so, it could be looking to make a resurgence at MWC 2016. Rumours point to a smartwatch offering from the company plus a new version of the HTC One M10, which is expected to follow similar design themes as those employed in the A9.



5 Microsoft

Conflicting rumours suggest a number of things for Microsoft's flagging Lumia line. Some have said that the Lumia 650 will be its last device, while others point to a 750/850 announcement at MWC. Those who want a Surface Phone should probably realise that it won't happen this time round but 2017 looks like a good bet.



6 LG

With the LG G4 now approaching a year old, it is a near certainty that the company will be announcing a follow-up at MWC. Rumours are plentiful on the web, with some suggesting that the company could be about to use a unique 'cartridge' accessory slot.

7 SONY

The Sony MWC press conference is still wrapped in apparent mystery, with passes issued to the media not hinting to any actual device launches. With the Z5 only released in September last year, it seems unlikely that it will launch a new flagship handset, though its tablet line and budget smartphone ranges could use some scrubbing up.



8 lenovo

Now that Motorola has been fully acquired by Lenovo, the line will undergo a full rebranding of 'Moto by Lenovo'. As such, we're actually dealing with two brands here and not one. With Lenovo handing its smartphone design division over to Motorola's expertise, we could perhaps expect some new 'Lenovo blue' handsets on display. There's also a real possibility of a new Moto X, especially since the last major generation jump was in September 2014.

9 Google

Project Ara is the modular handset that could revolutionise the way we use our smartphones... or it could be a complete flop. The device has been on the backburner for a while, with Google running into various issues that have halted its production. That said, with a confirmed date now scheduled for some time in 2016, it makes sense that the company could be showcasing its newest handset at some point during MWC.



THE EDGE OF INNOVATION

↓ Entrance with Badge ↓



10 HUAWEI

The Chinese smartphone giant always comes to MWC with a bang and this year will be no different. The company is expected to release four handsets which will make up the new P9 series, though rumour has it that it is debating delaying the launch past MWC in order to avoid direct competition. This will include a standard Huawei P9 model which targets the upper mid-range, a Huawei P9 Lite model with lower mid-range specs, a phablet-sized Huawei P9 Max model and the flagship Huawei P9 Premium. There's also a Surface Book competitor expected to debut in Barcelona, which would be a laptop/tablet hybrid running on the Windows OS.



11 KAZAM

British handset manufacturer Kazam is keen to make an impact at this year's MWC, with no less than 12 devices announced ahead of the event. The company will be bringing with it six new Trooper smartphones powered by Android, two Thunder smartphones running on the Windows 10 mobile OS, three Windows tablets and a new Life phone. The latter in the range is a simple-to-use device aimed at the elderly, similar to what Doro produces with its own handsets.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE AT MWC 2016

TOM:

As a closet Windows Phone fanboy who recently went to Android because of the woeful app situation, I'd love nothing more than a fully-fledged Surface Phone to show up out of the blue and shock everyone, complete with full Windows 10 and X86 apps. If Microsoft could somehow pull it off, it would be the most pivotal smartphone launch in years and totally reinvent the way we use our handsets. I'd also like to see more from Motorola despite its acquisition by Lenovo. As a happy user of the X Force, I hope that it continues with the same cost-effective quality it has become renowned for and doesn't change too much from its original ethos. Lastly, battery innovation is probably the other area where I think we need things to really change. Currently, we've had a few small breakthroughs over the past year so let's hope they culminate into something much bigger that can be implemented going forward.

MANNY

My heart desires a massive fight for attention from all the major manufacturers. Actually that's already going to happen. What I specifically want is all the major manufacturers to pull out their big guns and announce their flagship devices right there in Barcelona. Samsung Galaxy S7, HTC One M10, Sony Xperia Z6 and some dark horses from Chinese manufacturers. It would cement Mobile World Congress' status as the most important event of the year for the industry. Battery innovation is a recurring demand and it is no different this year. We are quite used to charging our near-dead devices at the end of the day but we really shouldn't be dictated by the vital signs of our daily drivers. Sure you can buy a power bank but the extra effort, of carrying something the size of your phone, is not something everyone will agree to. There are whispers of battery innovation coming from some manufacturers. Whoever can truly provide it will be lauded.



The Pebble Time

Cost: £179.99

Reviewer: Manny Pham

The Pebble Time was announced as a Kickstarter project and offers an alternative to the Apple Watch. A lot of time has passed since Pebble made its debut in 2013, more competition has sprung up since and Pebble is counteracting with the Pebble Time.

The Pebble Time is the highest funded Kickstarter project in history, raising more than \$20 million from donations. The donations were rewarded with... a colour-screen Pebble.

It is not as clear and vibrant as the Apple Watch or high-end Android Wear watches but it does add its own retro-looking charm. Colour may have been added now but it seems to only be capable of a chosen few.

The whole design of the timepiece seems to follow a theme of retro, as it resembles those cheap rubber Casio watches you got as a kid. The design will appeal to retro lovers but it really will look out of place on a smart/smart casual get up.

Plastic is the dominant material on

the Pebble Time with a thick steel frame surrounding the device. It just adds more borders to the already massive bezels on the screen. But hey, at least the steel frame refrains it from looking dainty on your wrist.

The rubber strap is super comfortable to wear and easy to put on. You will hardly notice the 42g body on your wrist. The straps are interchangeable, Pebble did not have any options for straps on launch, but thankfully it is 2016 now and you have a choice of other coloured rubber and steel bands.

Always-on screen

The screen is always on like the Huawei Watch with excellent viewing outdoors in bright sunlight. No matter the situation you will be able to see the time and your notifications. Like all wearables at the moment this is just purely a notification centre.

Set-up is simple. Download the app and follow the instructions and you're good to go. Whatsapp, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat all notify you at the exact same time your

phone would, so missing a message won't happen on the Pebble, especially with that haptic feedback in tow. It's a shame there is no function to reply through the watch but the Pebble is really quite basic.

It also links with Apple Health to provide some fitness wearable features like a pedometer and accelerator. Pebble claims it can handle up to 30m of water submersion. We couldn't exactly find the time to test that claim but accidentally showering with it did not knacker it. However, we did submerge it in a bath for 15 minutes, which it survived and still works as normal.

Cheaper alternative

Overall, it is a cheaper alternative to an Apple Watch or an Apple Wear device. Its most redeeming feature is notification centre as the third party apps library isn't really impressive. Other smartwatches are guilty of the same thing so it is a bit harsh to scrutinise it on that alone. If you fancy a comfortable retro-inspired notification centre on your wrist without paying an arm and a leg, the Pebble wouldn't be a bad choice.



- + Really comfortable
- + Charming animations
- + Great value for money
- Looks really cheap
- Bezels are massive
- Not enough third party apps



Anywhere Sim

Cost: £10 - £120 top-up
Reviewer: Manny Pham

We've all experienced really horrible signal at times when we need our phones the most. It is part of the reason why you won't find half the *What Mobile* team in Harrow (3 doesn't seem to play nicely there). With Anywhere SIM, having no signal will be a thing of the past. Using signal from EE, Vodafone and O2, Anywhere SIM picks up the strongest signal from the three and will connect automatically.

To fully take advantage of this feature you'll have to purchase "Anywhere UK" or "Anywhere EU". "Anywhere Home" is the lowest tier and with the cheapest rates but it only uses signal from O2. Rates from the other two are 10p (12p for EU) per minute, 5p per text and 10p per MB. Compared to rivaling sim cards it's cheap as a call

can cost 30p per minute on EE, Vodafone and O2. However, these carriers have moved on with PAYG bundles, offering value for money text, minutes and data. Anywhere SIM isn't expecting you to abandon your glorious unlimited 4G data bundle for it. It's more suited for holiday makers and people who travel all over the UK and Europe regularly. For EU travellers "Anywhere EU" works in 29 countries including France, Spain and Latvia.



In our test we found signal dropping to be non-existent while travelling around the capital. On a train journey up North for two hours, we started to see the bars falter by a couple, but it did not affect our calls.

- + Great signal
- + Easy to set up
- Expensive
- No 4G



Gear4 Espresso

Cost: £19.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn
Available from: www.hifisound.co.uk

For twenty quid you should never expect miracles, which is why we were so impressed with this budget mug Bluetooth speaker.

It is pretty small to hold and definitely ranks as one of the smallest speakers we've ever tested. Modelled on a coffee mug, it hides a surprisingly deep sound with plenty of treble and clarity. There's even a sprinkle of mid-bass in there for good measure. Pairing was easy once we found the stealthily placed power button on the rear and from there it was plain sailing. The carry clip is a nice addition for those who want to hook it up to a belt and there's a decent amount of volume to be had from it too. The quoted battery life for this speaker is four hours, which we felt was a little on the low side but it is hard to argue when the thing is so minute.



- + Tiny speaker, big sound
- + Cheap
- Maybe a little too small
- Battery life on the low side



Riva Turbo X

Cost: £299.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn
Available from: www.hifisound.co.uk

As you've probably gathered, we get a lot of Bluetooth speakers here at *What Mobile Towers*. In a market that is so heavily saturated, it can be difficult for these accessories to set themselves apart from the competition.

Riva wants to change that with the Turbo X. Frequency response is absent from all documentation but we can assure you that it goes

impressively deep considering its small size. At just 23cm in overall length, the speaker is definitely portable and can be thrown in a rucksack with ease. The design is very much monolithic and practical, with the speaker been more akin to a brick than anything else. That said, it definitely doesn't feel cheap and the premium materials on offer seem to justify its humongous price tag. Quality plastics and metal grilles which are all water resistant make up the majority of the product, while the touch-

sensitive buttons located on top illuminate when the device is first powered on.

Pairing was a synch, with no issues finding or connecting to the device whatsoever. We were also surprised to find so much connectivity available, with a USB charging port for smartphones and the ability to hook it up to turntables.

Then we have the sound, which was impressively balanced with a surprising amount of weight. Electronic tracks had a good mid-bass presence with plenty of power in the kick drum, though sub basses were expectedly absent. Acoustic tracks had plenty of transients, while the overall colouration felt impressively low. For natural listening, this could be the best of the bunch... If only it wasn't so expensive.

- + Beautifully natural sound
- + Goes up to 100dB
- + USB charge port

- Eye-wateringly expensive
- Carry case not included



Star Wars iHome Tie Fighter

Cost: £49.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn
Available from: www.firebox.com

Star Wars merchandise is still pretty hot stuff at the moment, with the film closing in on *Avatar* as the biggest selling cinema release of all time. As such, we can't help but pull in a few more goodies to ogle over.

This new Tie Fighter from iHome is a hefty Bluetooth speaker with a few novel features up its sleeve. For one, it can play the *Star Wars* Theme at the click of a button... on full volume. With no way to change it, I managed to successfully spook most members of the office when John Williams erupted out of the tiny front speaker.

And it is tiny. We measured it at barely 1 ½ inches across, which wouldn't necessarily be too bad if there was more than one cone. As it is, the speaker is merged into the cockpit and looks pretty flush with the unit, but it doesn't help with the sound quality. Trying a multitude of songs, we got a tinny response

characteristic of these kinds of Bluetooth speakers. Instruments were decently represented at louder volumes and there wasn't much in the way of distortion but a distinct lack of any bass made all of our test tracks sound rather thin.

Even so, we still had a certain soft spot for the thing, which is partly because it looks so brilliant on a desk. With the included stand, this feels like something you'd have on display more than in use. In that respect, it passes with flying colours. It is excellently built and a good size, while the illuminated ring around the cockpit only helps to make it look even cooler. Not the best speaker but certainly great to look at.

- + Looks awesome
- + Plays the Star Wars Theme!

- Not particularly loud
- Average sound quality
- Zero Bass



Vecto Mini

Cost: £29.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn
Available from: www.firebox.com



Almost as small as the Espresso by Gear4, the Vecto Mini is yet another budget Bluetooth speaker with barely any footprint.

A very functional looking speaker, the Vecto Mini probably won't win many awards for design.

It looks like something you would find on a construction site, with the bright orange detailing contrasting the jet black finish. Sound quality veers on the side of average, with clarity in the mid-range and treble but little presence. There's also no bass whatsoever and it is sometimes difficult to hear a kick drum at all

on lower volumes. Cranking it up to max will distort the signal quite noticeably, though it does go pretty loud for a small device. Perhaps the biggest selling point in its favour is water resistance, though we can't really justify you buying it for this quality alone.

- + Clear sounds at normal levels
- + Cheap
- Thin sound
- Distorts at loud volumes



Gear4 Street Party Dance

Cost: £59.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn
Available from: Argos

Small and compact but with a big sound, the Gear4 Street Party Dance instantly impressed us with its ability to fill a room successfully. At just 3.5-inches in size and with a handy carry clip, this is definitely one of the most versatile speakers we've used in a while.

It also comes with full IPX4 water protection, meaning that it will be able to take a few substantial splashes from various liquids. Build quality feels impressive, with a removable rubber outer body and good weight. Along with the included NFC and a decent 8-hour battery life, there's plenty to like about this deceiving little speaker.

When pairing with Bluetooth, you'll get the obligatory American-style voice that seems to accompany every speaker. Unfortunately, this voice is a little more annoying than others we've heard, with a really nasally sound that irks on the side of irritating.

Once you've paired the device (which is easy), you're treated to the sound quality... Which really isn't half bad.

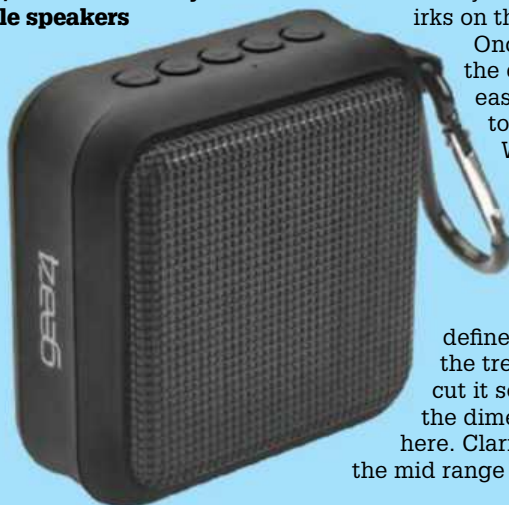
There's plenty of volume to be had from this speaker and the mid-bass is well defined. It's a little on the treble side but we'll cut it some slack due to the dimensions at play here. Clarity is good though the mid range sounds somewhat

recessed on guitar-heavy styles of music.

The visual aid of the illuminating front-panel really helps to make this more than just a generic Bluetooth speaker. Much like the JBL Pulse 2 we looked at in our Christmas gift guide, the speaker grille can glow in an all manner of different colours, which change according to the material fed into it. While it doesn't go quite as deep and include a colour sensor for customisation, there are still five separate light-show settings to give you some visual bliss. A great little travel speaker.

- + Packs a punch
- + Visual feedback is great addition
- + Small and compact

- Slightly recessed mids
- That Bluetooth voice



Microsoft Lumia 650

Rumoured to be the last ever Lumia, this mid-priced handset leaves us underwhelmed.

There's some big changes happening at Microsoft, with the Redmond giant currently riding a wave of innovation with devices such as the Surface Book and HoloLens. Unfortunately, not all of that publicity has necessarily been good, with one area in particular struggling under the opinion of critics. The area we are of course talking about is Windows 10 Mobile, which has sadly struggled to impress and deliver on its many promises so far. Currently, the Lumia 950, 950XL and 550 are the only devices you can get which run on Windows 10 Mobile. However, this could be set to change very soon with the addition of a new device to the line-up and the imminent wider release to older hardware.

The range has severely lacked a decent mid-range handset to compete against the Android heavyweights and if you're expecting anything monumental here, you will be sadly out of luck once again. While the 6 series is typically reserved for the bottom of the mid-range, the expected specifications of this device read like something you would see on a budget handset. As a matter of fact, comparing them side-by-side with the Lumia 550 reveals very little difference aside from a few select areas.

Starting with the design, it looks to be almost business as usual, with that same plastic polycarbonate body which carries a subtle curve around the edges for easier grip. One thing you will immediately notice is the metal strip around the edge, which seems to be Microsoft taking notice from the apparent lack of premium aesthetics found on the higher end flagships. On the back, a chrome Microsoft logo sits proudly on the back of the device, while the 8 megapixel camera sensor protrudes slightly. The positioning of the rear camera sensor is more akin to the 9XX series than the 5XX series, with the lens a little higher up.

LARGER SCREEN

On the front, you have a 5 megapixel front-facing camera tucked away in the right corner and what looks to be an iris scanner for Windows Hello. The screen is slightly larger at 5.0-inches though the resolution remains the same at 1280 x 720, meaning the pixel resolution is slightly below the 300 DPI standard at around 294 pixels-per-inch.

Internally, things are pretty unexciting, with a lowly Snapdragon 210/212 rather than the initially expected 410. RAM is 1GB, which should allow for the optimal Windows 10 Mobile experience, though we can't help but feel a little let down. The battery is stated at 2,000mAh, which is fair amount but once again is easily outclassed.

The Lumia 650 is expected to release sometime in February, though the exact date is still yet to be confirmed by Microsoft. Pricing is expected to be around the £150 to £200 mark. Being one of the newer Lumias, you can expect it to ship with Windows 10 Mobile out of the box. With the company still struggling to gain traction in the mobile market, even after the introduction of its new operating system, there are rumours that this could be its last Lumia ever. It's hardly a fitting swan-song for the brand to end its name on... but at least we can all look forward to the potential Surface Phone that could possibly precede it.



WHAT MOBILE Excitement Meter



Microsoft's rumoured last Lumia handset, the 650, isn't going to excite many people.

Oppo F1

Huawei is looking to build on its incredible momentum with a new and improved phablet. But is the beefy device a welcome step forward or just more of the same?

Oppo has made some headlines recently for its 'bezel-less' smartphone panels among other things, with camera tech soon to be added to its ever-expanding repertoire. The relatively unknown Chinese smartphone manufacturer has partnered with Samsung to release a brand new handset firmly focused on taking high-quality photographs. A decidedly mid-range handset in terms of raw specs, it offers a decent amount of power for a very modest €229 (£176).

On the design front, it is immediately obvious that Oppo has a specific design theme across all its devices. That said, this shouldn't be seen as a negative when the build quality is always so consistently premium. The company enjoys making lavish looking handsets and the F1 is no slouch. Reflective metal trim surrounds the edges while a brushed metal rear helps to give an illusion of something that costs far more. Add to this a thickness of only 7.3mm and you have an extremely attractive handset. The screen is 5.0-inches and features 2.5D curved glass with Gorilla Glass 4 protection, which for most people is a very comfortable size that definitely feels more appealing versus those huge phablet devices. Resolution for the

panel is a bit low at only 1280x720, though there is likely a reason Oppo has chosen to do this and it relates to the camera...

PHONE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

We mentioned the partnership with Samsung earlier and it is pretty paramount to the business direction for this device. Marketed as a phone for photography, you'll be getting a 13 megapixel Samsung made ISOCELL camera that offers Phase Detection Autofocus speeds of just 0.1 seconds. Along with OPPO's own Pure Image software processing, you can even get oversampled images up to an insane 50 megapixels. This wouldn't sound out of place on a flagship, so to have it on a handset that costs just over £170 is a mighty impressive bargain.

Carrying on the photo theme is the front camera, which is an equally impressive 8 megapixel snapper. The company is quite proud of it, with plenty of claims that we'll need to refute until we actually test it. On paper, the f/2.0 aperture should mean that it can let in a lot more light, though it can't surpass the heavyweights such as Samsung, which have managed to squeeze that little bit more.

Oppo is shipping the F1 with a Snapdragon 616, which is an octa-core CPU. Performance should be very good enough for most users. It is also partnered with a hefty 3GB RAM, which is once again a feature you would not really expect at this price point. The device runs on Android Lollipop V5.1 with the Oppo Color OS 2.1 skin, which is one of the better launchers out there.

The Oppo F1 will be available in two colour variants – either Gold or Rose Gold depending on the market. You should be able to get it from a few outlets, with Amazon currently listing it for pre-order at £169.00, with a release date scheduled for 29 February.



WHAT MOBILE Excitement Meter



Oppo continues to diversify its smartphone line with the photography-focused F1.

Samsung Galaxy A Series

Samsung has unveiled a refresh to its Galaxy A series, a trio of premium handsets that aim to capture the mid-range market.

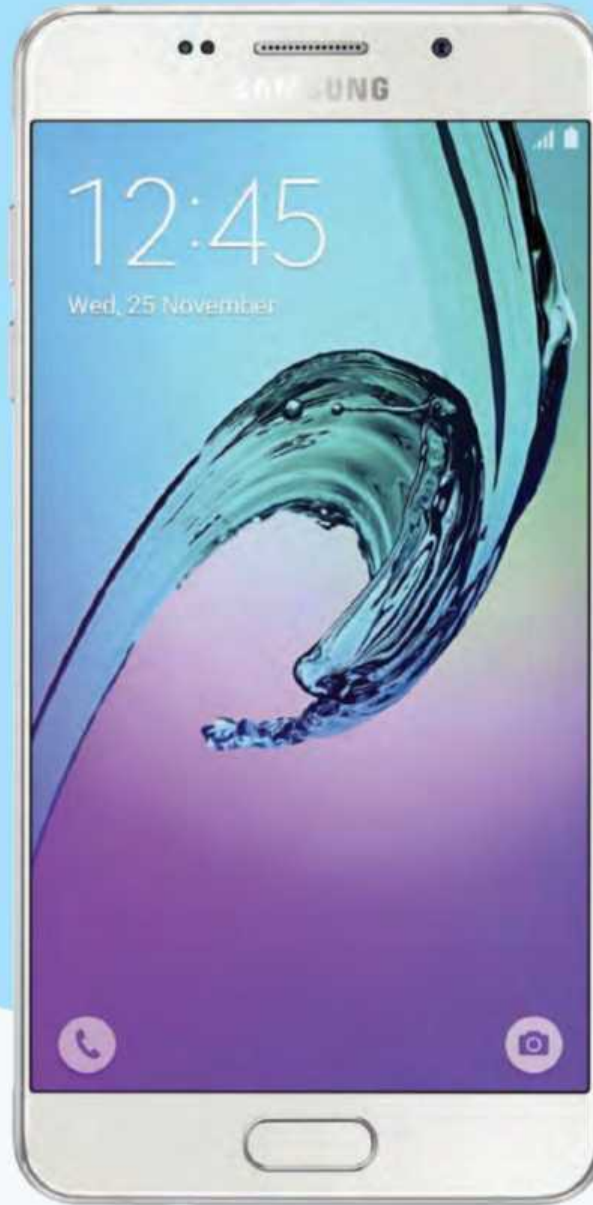
Samsung's upcoming Galaxy handsets are updates of last year's 'A' line, a budget smartphone with a premium twist. On the design front, all three boast a slightly altered design when compared with their previous-generation variants. The glass design with metal trim has been carried over. However, the edges of each handset now features a curved finish, which makes them much more akin to the iPhone 6 and 6s range. This should mean they are arguably more comfortable to hold in the hand, though we will have to wait until we get one ourselves to confirm things. Aesthetics isn't the only thing that has made a jump in these new smartphones, as the internal hardware has also gotten a bump in each model... albeit to varying degrees.

SAMSUNG GALAXY A3

The Samsung Galaxy A3 keeps the same 720p panel as its predecessor. However, it is now slightly larger at 4.7-inches versus 4.5-inches. The 8 megapixel camera has gotten a significant boost, with the sensor now capable of some impressive 13 megapixel images. Processor and memory remains the same, with a Snapdragon 410 and 1.5GB RAM. The battery gets a slight increase to 2,300mAh, which is a welcome addition. The A3 will retail in the UK for £269.

SAMSUNG GALAXY A5

The mid device in the line-up gets the



biggest upgrade of the bunch, with a larger 5.2-inch 1080p panel versus the dated 5.0-inch 720p screen found in its older sibling. The camera is once again a 13 megapixel shooter, while the processor has been bumped up to an octa-core model, which should offer much better performance versus the previous 410. RAM remains the same 2GB as before, which is enough for a device that sits in the middle of the range. Equally, the 2,900mAh battery is a huge jump over the last generation and should ensure better talk time. The A5 will cost £319.

SAMSUNG GALAXY A7

The most powerful variant of the Galaxy 'A' range gets the least improvement, with the same specs as last year's model. That means another 5.5-inch screen and the same 13 megapixel rear shooter/5 megapixel front shooter. The performance remains the same, with an octa-core processor and 2GB RAM. For the top phone in the range, we were perhaps expecting a little more. The battery gets a huge bump to 3,300mAh, now putting it in the upper tier of devices. The A7 will retail in the UK for £399.

All the devices will come with Android Lollipop 5.1.1, which is a little disappointing considering that Marshmallow is now becoming commonplace. 16GB internal memory is included across the range, which will be expandable via microSD slot on all devices. Expect the range to release sometime towards the end of February.

WHAT MOBILE Excitement Meter



A good bunch of mid-range handsets that will no doubt solidify Samsung's presence further.



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Lumia 950 & 950XL

The Lumia 950 and 950XL are Microsoft's hottest new flagship handsets but will they be enough to tempt customers away from Android and iOS?

Price: £399.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn



LUMIA 950 SPEC SHEET

OS Windows 10 Mobile	200GB
Processor: 1.5GHz octa-core Snapdragon 808	Rear camera 20MP
Screen 5.2 inches	Front camera 5MP
Resolution 1440 x 2560 pixels (564ppi)	Video 4K
Memory 3GB	Connectivity Bluetooth, Wi-Fi
Storage 32GB	Dimensions 145 x 73 x 8.2 mm
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to	Weight 150g
	Battery 3,000mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3_{/5}

Camera



5_{/5}

Battery



3_{/5}

Price: £469.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn

LUMIA 950XL SPEC SHEET

OS Windows 10 Mobile	200GB
Processor: 1.5GHz octa-core Snapdragon 808	Rear camera 20MP
Screen 5.7 inches	Front camera 5MP
Resolution 1440 x 2560 pixels (518ppi)	Video 4K
Memory 3GB	Connectivity Bluetooth, Wi-Fi
Storage 32GB	Dimensions 152 x 78 x 8.1 mm
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to	Weight 165g
	Battery 3,340mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4_{/5}

Camera



5_{/5}

Battery



3_{/5}





The camera is one of the best we've tested in low lighting conditions

Microsoft's Windows 10 Mobile operating system is finally finished after a long preview period, with the complete OS debuting in two flagship handsets from the company. The Lumia 950 and 950XL are supposed to represent the pinnacle of what the new software is capable of, with various new features such as Windows Hello, flagship level processors and a much improved camera. Since the handsets are quite similar overall,



Whichever device you buy should make little difference to the image quality

we've decided to compile both reviews into a single one. The thing is, will all of this new technology be enough to pull people away from Android and iOS?

DESIGN

The Lumia handsets are pretty unmistakable from a visual perspective, with a familiar design theme that makes them very easy to pick out in a crowd. Unfortunately, you can hardly call them premium. Both the Lumia 950 and 950XL are handsets that look mid-range, perhaps even less. While they may be functional, there just isn't anything to really elevate them into the same level as the HTCs, Samsungs and Apples of this world.

Looking at the devices from the back, you don't really get any indication that they are different to other Lumias either, with a lone Microsoft logo the only thing standing out. The camera sensor on the 950XL carries a subtle metal trim around the edge and the 950 has its sensor encased in metal, but other than this the overall devices seem pretty barren.

Move round to the front and it is a similar story, with lone Microsoft writing above the screen being the only visual cue. It's very minimal, which on some handsets could be seen as desirable. Here, though, it once again feels empty. That said, there are still a few positives to be made here. Both handsets are impressively thin at only 8.1mm, while the screen takes up plenty of space on the front and helps the device to feel slim and comfortable in the hand. The matte plastic may not exactly

be premium but it helps with grip, making the device feel snug and safe in the hand. The inclusion of USB-C is also a nice touch, while the removable battery and microSD slot may be enough to swing it for some people.

CAMERA

From what we could tell, both the Lumia 950 and 950XL contain the same camera sensor. Even the lens angle appears to be the same. As such, whichever device you buy should make little difference to the image quality... and that's a very good thing. With a 20 megapixel camera and f/1.9 aperture, it is certainly impressive on paper. The backside illuminated sensor and optical image stabilisation should certainly help with those night pictures, while the PureView technology has got a bit of a name for itself in high-quality mobile photography.

Since Microsoft has inherited the Nokia camera division, we were expecting good results with the camera. Needless to say, we were still pretty blown away by the overall quality. Detail in daytime conditions is incredible, with very impressive white balance from the go. Colour reproduction is natural, while even the most difficult shots can turn out evenly exposed. Low-light is equally impressive, with plenty of detail



Windows 10 Mobile is the newest evolution of Microsoft's mobile operating system

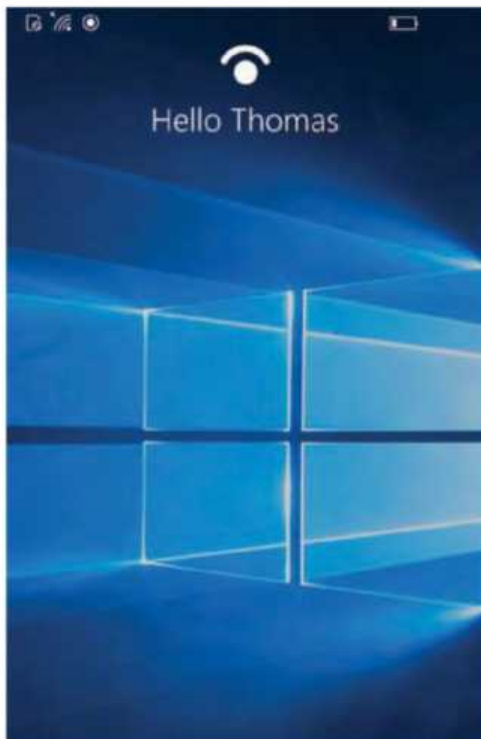
even in the darkest of conditions. In fact, they may well both be the best low-light cameras we've tested thus far.

Also included with all Lumia handsets is the brilliant Lumia Camera application, which has a plethora of manual features and one of the best interfaces we've encountered on a mobile app. It was one of the main reason that we personally held onto our Lumia 920 for so long and thus far we haven't found anything on Android that compares.

SCREEN

Both devices come with impressive 1440 x 2560 OLED panels, which have beautifully wide viewing angles and colour depth. The Lumia 950 carries a 5.2-inch panel, which equates to 564 pixels-per-inch, while the larger 5.7-inch panel on the Lumia 950XL equates to 518 pixels-per-inch. Colour calibration is very good out of the box, with the 950 only ever slightly redder than the 950XL. Contrast is deep and colours pop thanks to that OLED display and Nokia's ClearBlack technology. In fact, both panels look remarkably similar, which is a testament to Microsoft's factory tweaking.

Overall brightness levels for both handsets are very good and among the brightest we've tested, though it can't quite match the likes of the Xperia Z5



The intuitive Windows Hello is one of the big new features on these flagships



You will need to opt for the 950XL if you want to play the latest games

series, which are the brightest handsets we've ever tested. Still, for most users these devices should be more than good enough for bright indoor and outdoor use.

PERFORMANCE

General performance from both handsets is very good and browsing through the UI is both quick and easy. The Windows OS has always been known for its speedy performance even on budget hardware, so it is nice to see that the newest iteration follows suit. Next came the benchmarking, but with no Geekbench available on the Windows App Store we searched for the next best thing, an application known as PhoneMark. The result actually put the 950 behind the 930, which isn't too surprising considering the latter had a range-topping Snapdragon 800 at the time. As for the 950XL, it once again loses out to the 930, which is definitely unexpected given this is the current flagship processor available. We can only assume/hope that the benchmarking software is not pushing them to their limits.

Gaming was a mixed affair, with *Halo: Spartan Assault* refusing to work outright on both devices. *Asphalt 8: Airborne* did manage to work, though the performance on the regular 950 was less than stellar. A stuttering frame-rate caused issues playing the game, which is unsurprising considering the Snapdragon 808 is powering a full 1440p panel. Performance on the 950XL was much better, with a smooth frame-rate even on the highest settings. All-in-all, if you want to play the latest games, you'll need to opt for the 950XL.

SOFTWARE

Windows 10 Mobile is the newest evolution of Microsoft's mobile operating system, which last saw light as version 8.1. That update brought a number of notable features, though this is the first true major overhaul we've seen since the debut of Windows Phone 8.

Since the preview version we tested in an earlier version of *What Mobile*, it really come on in leaps and bounds. Performance is speedy and quick, major bugs have been successfully ironed out and the whole



Windows 10 Mobile is a great operating system but the overall experience feels unfinished

experience feels much more fluid.

That said, is still far from perfect. While the big issues have been solved, there's still numerous smaller niggles that need fixing. One of which is the Windows Store, which quite simply doesn't work. The application seemed to stall miserably when there was lots of apps to update and we got strange error messages after installing certain ones. That and the general lack of apps managed to dampen the experience enough that I got a little frustrated... And this is coming from somebody who used to be a big advocate of the platform.

Windows Hello is one of the big new features on these flagships and was also recently debuted on the Surface Pro 4. The basic principle is the same – unlocking your device by simply staring at the screen. Setup was blisteringly fast and once it was done, we had very little issues with the device recognising our eyes. The little infrared light in the top right corner of the handset will illuminate when Hello is actively trying to scan your face, with the whole process taking little more than a half second to achieve. It is a really great feature and one that we think feels more intuitive than using the conventional fingerprint sensor.

BATTERY

The battery on the Lumia 950 is a large 3,000mAh, while the 950XL has an even larger 3,340mAh battery. Our battery drain test during an intense 30-minute

gaming session on Asphalt 8 was somewhat surprising, as both handsets lost more than 20% of their overall charge. This is not a great result and is somewhat inconsistent with the day-to-day performance, which felt a lot better. A day of moderate use was comfortably achievable, so long as you didn't overdo it with the power-hungry applications. The heat generated from both of these devices was noticeably hot under long sessions that taxed the hardware, so we can only assume that this is somewhat affecting the battery in some way.

Both phones carry quick charging features, which claim to charge the devices from 10% to 50% within half an hour. In testing, we found this to be about true, with a full charge almost capable within under two hours.

CONCLUSION

A couple of good handsets with some truly excellent features but the software side really lets them down. Windows 10 Mobile is a great operating system to be sure but in places the overall experience still feels unfinished. We're also not sure about the design of both devices, which don't really live up to the premium claim that the internal components strive so hard to back up. There's plenty here to satisfy the Windows fans out there but appealing to the mass market will still take a bit more refinement, which is why we are currently on the fence. Two good devices that could have been greats.

CONTINUUM

The other big feature is of course Continuum, which is really the crown jewel of Windows 10 Mobile. With the Display Dock connector, it is possible to scale the experience onto your desktop monitor. What you get is something that looks like a halfway point between Windows 10 and Windows 10 Mobile. Setup is easy, with three cables and nothing to install. It just works.

You also get the advantage of fast charging your phone while it is connected to the display dock, a nice additional feature. Although most apps are not optimised for Continuum, those that are work very well. Seeing a full-screen desktop equivalent running on your monitor is really something special, while being able to check your phone while doing so is even cooler. It's not all smooth sailing though, as certain apps such as the browser will stutter at points and struggle to run. Still, for an early taste of what we can expect as mobile processors get more powerful, we were impressed.

VERDICT



A couple of good devices from Microsoft that are harboured by some performance woes and dodgy battery life that veers on inconsistent. If you're a Windows fanboy waiting for a flagship, there's a lot to like in these devices. A great camera, Windows Hello and Continuum are standout features, but the overall experience still isn't up to standard. For the rest of us, there really isn't enough to pull you over.

- + Great screen
- + Excellent camera
- + MicroSD slot
- Gets a little toasty
- Some performance issues
- Software unfinished in places

LUMIA 950XL

- + Great screen
- + Excellent camera
- + MicroSD slot
- Gets a little toasty
- That app store
- Software unfinished in places

LUMIA 950

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE	USABILITY
★★★★★	★★★★★
DESIGN	FEATURES
★★★★★	★★★★★
INNOVATION	VALUE
★★★★★	★★★★★

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE	USABILITY
★★★★★	★★★★★
DESIGN	FEATURES
★★★★★	★★★★★
INNOVATION	VALUE
★★★★★	★★★★★

Huawei Mate S

The Huawei Mate S is a sleek and well-made phone that had us falling in love with it at first sight. Does the inside match up? Let's take a gander.

Price: £399.99 Reviewer: Manny Pham



AMOLED
HD display



SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.1.1 (upgradeable to Marshmallow 6.0)
Processor HiSilicon Kirin 935
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels (401 ppi)
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Micro SD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 8MP
Video HD
Connectivity 3G, 4G, LTE
Dimensions 149.8 x 75.3 x 7.2 mm
Weight 156g
Battery 2,700mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4₅

Camera



3₅

Battery



3₅

Huawei's latest attempt at cracking the European and American market. Announced at IFA in Berlin, Huawei is looking to improve on what made the Honor 7 an excellent device. The main feature that caught our eye at IFA was the inclusion of 'Force Touch'. Strangely the Force Touch 128GB, model of the Mate S is not slotted for release in the UK. Strange as Huawei would have capitalised on its Android rivals. So we have the 32GB version to play with but not Force Touch. Cue sad face.

DESIGN

The Mate S sets a high bar for 2016. Its all-metal unibody screams top end and had us taken aback as this is meant to be a mid-range device. It feels great in your hands and won't look out of place next to high-end flagship devices. You can tell Huawei paid attention to the small details with the way the Mate S just surprises you with a shiny chrome border and, best of all, a fingerprint sensor on the back of the device.

In the same vein as the iPhone 6s and HTC M9, the Mate S has flush antenna lines. More so HTC, as the back of the Mate S has a striking resemblance to the One series. If Huawei didn't stick to the rectangular-shaped body, you'd be forgiven for mistaking it for a device from the Taiwanese tech giant.



The camera captured some excellent shots...



The Mate S is a mesmerising shooter

The power buttons run along the right side below the volume keys for a more ergonomic reach. The buttons themselves are tactile and responsive, exactly what you'd expect. Headphone jacks and built-in mic are on top with the mic symmetrically lined up in the middle. Flip the phone over and you can see it is in perfect symmetry with the camera and fingerprint sensor. The symmetry is seen on the bottom of the device with two speaker grills staring you down. Remember it's a mid-range device so only one of them works.

CAMERA

The 13 megapixel camera is comparable to the Axon Mini (also reviewed this issue) and other mid-rangers offering optical image stabilisation. Video is shot in HD up to 30 frames per second, aiding the smooth video capturing.

Photos are full of clarity. We captured some amazing shots in central London after fiddling with the manual settings a bit but the auto settings do a fine enough job already in setting up the perfect shot for you. In decent lighting the Mate S is a mesmerising shooter, capturing some really detailed pictures at the best of times. To see any blurring of pictures you'll have to zoom in pretty close. Low lighting isn't as impressive as noise appears in the background, not exactly ideal.

As expected with any phone from a Chinese manufacturer, there is a beauty mode included. The obsession of having an unblemished selfie with a Casper hue is alive and thriving. If that is what you're looking for, the beauty mode does the job. To avoid looking like some sort of demented anime character, you can set the beauty level mode in 10 levels. The beauty mode really goes hand in hand with the 8-megapixel selfie camera. That's right, 8-megapixels in a mid-range device, but that is what we have come to expect with devices from China. The Axon Mini also sees similar selfie capabilities, albeit the Mini does it slightly better. That doesn't mean the Mate S is slacking. Selfies are produced with clarity in excellent lighting situations and obviously full of noise in low light. We found it surprising to see the Mate S and Axon Mini have a superior selfie game than the S6 and Xperia Z5.

SCREEN

We see quite a bit of high-range in the Mate S and there's one right in front of your face with the screen. Covered in Gorilla Glass 4, the device can take quite a bit of a beating. Using the device as our main driver for a week did nothing to the screen, not even a scratch from everyday jean rubbage.

How it looks is what really matters and with an AMOLED Full HD display it is splendid on



... but isn't as impressive in low light

the eyes. Viewing angles are excellent, with a 5.5-inch panel you can easily share a video with two others with no problems. Outdoor visibility is clear. If the outdoors proves to be too much, putting the device up to full brightness will do the job. With an AMOLED display colour contrasts are excellent with deep blacks.

PERFORMANCE

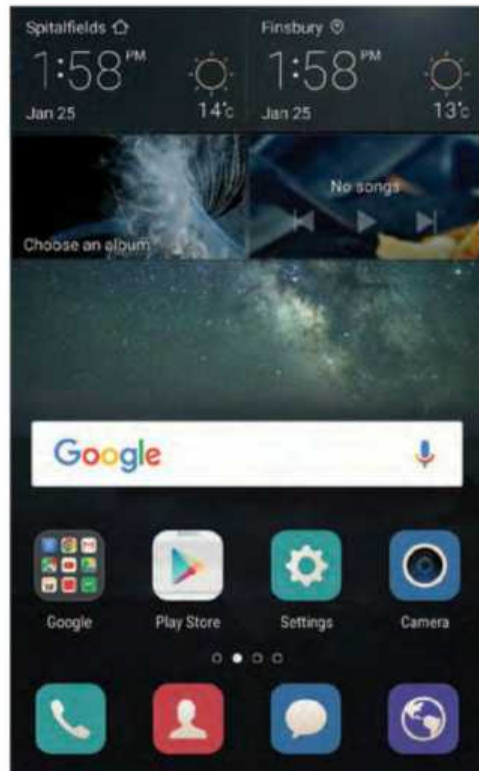
Optimisation is the way Apple operates and by doing so it keeps its specs low but maximises performance. No one does it better and probably will never be able to replicate it (unless something truly revolutionary arises). Huawei is trying to optimise by doing what it always does and use its own in-house processors. The HiSilicon Kirin 935 performs excellent with day-to-day use. Launching apps is quick and easy. It is starting to become apparent that mid-range devices are becoming a league of their own. Scrolling through the Mate S is no different from scrolling through the S6 or Motorola X Force.

But when we really pushed the Kirin 935 we started to see some cracks. Playing *Asphalt 8* intensively for 30 minutes is a painful experience. The frame rate jumps all over the place like a kangaroo on a pogo stick. It becomes almost unplayable. For the sake of the battery test we powered through and like any game with low frame rates, you get used to it. Well, after crashing into several cars and losing many races you do. Huawei still has work to do with its processors.

On Geekbench it scored on average 856 in the single-core test and 3588 in multi-core. Quite low for a chip that is supposed to match up to Qualcomm's Snapdragon 810. Snapdragon 810 devices usually surpass the 1,000 mark in the single-core test and 4,000 in the multi-score. Despite its low-ish score the phone performs smoothly with no hint of lag even when multi-tasking.

SOFTWARE

The Mate S runs Android 5.1.1 Lollipop with Huawei's Emotion UI skin on top, making the



The simple user interface is very iOS-esque

layout very iOS-esque with the curved edge square icons. Similarities don't stop there as Huawei continues to not include an app tray with Emotion. So for organisation you'll have to make folders just like an iPhone. It takes some getting used to but it is not as bad as everyone says it is. Yes, it feels a bit limited but it does not degrade the experience with Emotion. If you like a big screen but don't have the hands to wield one, Emotion has you covered with a one-hand layout mode that is easy to activate and deactivate with a simple slide of the on-screen buttons.

Force Touch is only available on the 64GB 'Luxury' variant. Sadly we will not see it on this side of the world. It is baffling why Huawei wouldn't include a new and innovative feature to help it stand out from the competition. We can only guess that by adding Force Touch the price would go up a "touch".

Emotion 2.0 makes its debut on the Mate S, offering an improved experience from the

Mate 7. By drawing a letter, you can quickly launch an app, drawing a 'C' will launch the camera and you can do this even when the screen is locked. Knuckle can also wake up your display and take screenshots in a timely manner (something for you Snapchatters to consider). What also got an upgrade is the fingerprint sensor – it is two times faster and twice as responsive. The Mate S wakes up immediately upon touching with no stutter or delay. You can also use it to scroll through the UI if you just want to use one hand.

BATTERY

Battery capacity weighs in at a standard 2,700 mAh, lasting us throughout the day and more some the next day, which was surprising to say the least. If you are really frugal with the Mate S you can make it last until lunchtime the next day, which of course as professionals we tried and did. Half an hour of intense gaming with *Asphalt 8* only depleted the battery by 13%. Making it excellent to use as your daily driver, you will not be bored on the tube again. The battery is non-removable and does not have fast charging like the A9. It won't be too much of a hinderance as charging it for 30 minutes will give you 35% of charge. With 2,700 mAh you get roughly around 5-6 hours of onscreen time.

CONCLUSION

While the Mate S is a truly beautiful device with plenty to offer, we feel a bit mugged off not getting the 'Luxury' Force Touch edition. Other reviews show how the 'Luxury' edition handles gaming quite well, dispelling that crap reputation Kirin processors have. Apart from the stuttering slow gaming experience the Mate S performs excellent in all the important areas. It is a premium feeling device with a selfie shooter that will please selfie enthusiasts. Emotion may not be everyone's cup of tea but it does have some cool features like Knuckle and a simple to use UI. Still, for the price it should come with Force Touch, for around the price you can get the S6.

VERDICT

A mid-range device that will do well as your new day-to-day device. It has a simple UI that iOS users can easily get acclimatised to, the best aspects of Android Lollipop are in for an even better experience. Processor lets gaming enthusiasts down as dropped frame rates are so bad it actually affect gameplay. But the Kirin 935 performs excellent in multi-tasking and running everything you would use day-to-day.

- + Premium build quality
- + Fast fingerprint sensor
- + Great selfie camera
- No Force Touch
- Top range price
- No app tray

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★



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ZTE Axon Mini Premium Edition

ZTE has released a new Premium version of the Axon Mini which supports its own version of Force Touch. Will the force be strong with this one?

Price: £229.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn



You may remember a few issues ago when we reviewed the ZTE Axon Elite and gave it a pretty glowing four-star review. Well, this time around we have its little brother, the Axon Mini Premium version, which on first appearance you could confuse for the same device. At only £229.99, it has got itself firmly placed in the lower end of the mid-range market and has a good feature-set to match. With the inclusion of unique features such as 'Force Touch', the Premium version stands out even further as a handset that has the potential to be a little disruptive. Trouble is, will the feature just amount to a gimmick? Let's find out.

DESIGN

The design is no different to its bigger brother, right down to the tiny details. As such, a lot of this is going to feel like regurgitation. Overall build quality is decent, with a gold metal finish and machine cut geometric grilles flanking either side of the screen.

In terms of size, the Axon Mini is a little different to the Elite and arguably more comfortable to hold. At 144 x 70, it's exactly the same size as the Samsung Galaxy S6 which we could argue is the perfect size. The two grilles seem much smaller this time round and the home button has been removed, making the device much less taller and more compact.

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.1.1
Processor: 1.5GHz octa-core Snapdragon 616
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels (424ppi)
Memory 3GB
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? No

Rear camera 13MP
Front camera 8MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity Bluetooth, Wi-Fi
Dimensions 144 x 70 x 8 mm
Weight 140g
Battery 2,800mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



3₅

Camera



4₅

Battery



4₅



The Axon Mini carries across the same excellent camera application found on the Elite

CAMERA

With a 13 megapixel camera sensor, the Axon Mini camera is identical to the Axon Elite aside from the omission of the additional 2 megapixel Omni Vision sensor. This was confirmed by one of the PR representatives who agreed with us after we noticed the images were strikingly similar. In fact, image quality was so alike that there's really very little to mention here. Colour reproduction was natural, though picture processing was perhaps a touch aggressive on close inspection. Low-light is acceptable, though it can't match flagships such as the Samsung Galaxy S6 and LG G4.

We're also happy to see the Axon Mini carries across the same excellent camera application found on the Elite. That means a full suite of manual features and some unique modes, which overlay and filter various snaps for striking effects. 4K video is expectedly absent in this model, as is optical image stabilisation. The 8 megapixel front camera from the Elite is also here as well, which was a strong performer in the previous review.

SCREEN

The ZTE Axon Mini has a 5.2-inch 1920 x 1080 panel which equates to 423ppi, a high number that's way above the printing standard. Colour reproduction is generally excellent across the board and after software

calibration, very little changes from the original image, which is excellent. Brightness of the panel is very good and even exceeds that found on the S6.

PERFORMANCE

Performance on the Axon Mini is about what you'd expect, meaning it is powerful enough for most tasks but never really excels either. UI navigation and app switching are both quick and seamless, with little lag between transitions. During our Geekbench 3 testing, we averaged a score of 3217 for multi-core and 712 for single-core over five separate tests. This puts it on same level as the HTC One A9, which uses a slightly more powerful Snapdragon 617.

Gaming was a solid affair, with some bottlenecking seeming to take place after long sessions. On the whole, things were pretty good most of the time but towards the mid-point of our gaming test we did notice the device becoming a bit on the toasty side.

The 'Premium' moniker attached to this version of the Axon Mini is justifiably done so because of the inclusion of 'Force Touch', which is coincidentally the same name Apple called its version of the technology. Unsurprisingly, it works just the same as on the iPhone 6s, with heavy presses bringing up additional menu's and options. That said, the MiFavor software doesn't feel as ready for this

feature as iOS does and it is the same with the applications. There's only a handful that currently offer the functionality and until the feature becomes more widespread in other devices, we can't see that changing.

SOFTWARE

We're in familiar territory once again, as the software on the Axon Mini is Lollipop 5.0.2 with that garish MiFavor overlay. That means no app tray and a pretty ugly looking UI. However, the novelty features such as a resizable keyboard and emoticon trays are still all here for quick access, while pressing the rightmost button brings up quick-functions for the overall theme and design.

A standout feature of the Axon Elite was Iris scanning, which functioned similar to Windows Hello (though not quite as fluently). It has been carried across to the Axon Mini as well, which is pretty impressive for a budget device. The software is identical, simply asking you to place your eyes within a certain area of the screen while it scans them. The Axon Mini has the same bundled bloatware as the Elite.

BATTERY

The battery on the Axon Mini is an impressive 2800mAh, which is pretty decent for a 5.2-inch device. Playing *Asphalt 8* for an entire hour drained the battery by around 25%, which is a good score though not as impressive as the Elite. Like its bigger brother, ZTE has included Quick Charge 2.0 technology, which allows the handset to reach 60% battery capacity in just 30 minutes. The battery is indeed non-removable, meaning those going on long trips should definitely consider investing in a powerbank.

CONCLUSION

It looks identical to the Elite and performs much the same as well, until you get to the gaming side of things. All in all, this is a very cost effective handset with solid battery life and a few bells and whistles such as Force Touch thrown in.

VERDICT

A worthy little brother to the Axon Elite, the Mini might suffer from a few performance woes while gaming but makes up for it with a lot of features at an attractive price and one that is unique to this device specifically.

- + Force Touch
- + Same great camera as the Elite
- + Excellent calibration out of the box
- Gets a little toasty
- Some performance issues
- No microSD slot

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★

Doro Liberto 825

Doro is back with another unique device that goes against traditional smartphone values. Will it stand out in this competitive market?

Price: £250.00 Reviewer: Manny Pham

Now let's get something straight, Doro isn't your typical manufacturer. It is not your Samsung or Apple trying to reinvent the wheel, more so helping those get used to that first wheel made of rock. Doro dedicates itself to creating devices that are at the pinnacle of usability. Devices that are extremely easy to use and that you would fail to not get to grasp. The Doro Liberto 825 is a clever device with a simple interface and functions that will come in handy for those less abled.

DESIGN

The 825 isn't going to win any beauty pageants. It has a very utilitarian design, which is reminiscent of the Motorola X Force. The Force also favoured usability over aesthetics and it did so masterfully. The 825 can be uttered in the same breath, sporting a similar size to the Force. It is easy to grasp and very comfortable to roll around your hands. Premium materials aren't seen here, no metal body or crystal displays. Instead the 825 has a chunky body with a rubber back to increase stability for those who struggle holding a large device. You sense that it is one for durability. With the rounded plastic shell, scratches and drops won't affect the 825 the way it would an iPhone – a plus as we wouldn't want Doro users getting heart attacks. With a 5-inch screen it is not too



massive. It is arguably the perfect size for a smartphone.

The power button is located on the right side where you naturally rest your thumb. A practice not a lot of premium manufacturers carry out, despite how much it makes sense to put it there. Above the power button are the volume keys with plus and minus etched next to their respective key. To further highlight the keys, there are Braille-like dots, making it easier to differentiate them. On the opposite side is the camera button, which handily launches the camera with a paused hold of the button. The front buttons are clearly labelled with their purposes. The task manager, home and back buttons are tactile and always preferred from the standard on-screen buttons. Down the left side are three metal connectors for a charging dock you can purchase separately.

CAMERA

There isn't much we can say about the camera seeing as it isn't the priority feature when constructed. It's a 8-megapixel snapper and at its current price point, there are far better alternatives for those that desire a smartphone with a decent camera. Not saying that the 825 isn't decent, it's just not up to a certain standard that the general populous are used to. But we don't expect Doro to be including Sony's latest lens in its phones.

SPEC SHEET

OS Android 5.1.1 Lollipop
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 210
Screen 5-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible Yes, up to 32GB
Rear camera 8MP

Front camera 2MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G, 4G, LTE
Dimensions 145.8 x 72.5 x 10.1 mm
Weight 156g
Battery 2,000mAh

AT A GLANCE

Speed



4₅

Camera



2₅

Battery



4₅

It was actually pretty confusing to figure out how to launch the camera, especially if you are used to launching the camera from the screen. It isn't in the app tray and the only way to launch it from the screen is to swipe up at the home screen and you'll find it there. It's better off using the dedicated camera button. Taking pictures can be frustrating. It takes a while to adjust exposure and the auto-focus is no better. There isn't really a clear indicator of when the picture has been taken. But when you do play by the 825's rules it surprisingly takes some decent pictures. Night shots suffer from noise but we managed to pull off some arty looking shots of the Thames. Good lighting is the only time the camera should really be used, picture quality may not be as good as we're used to, but it's good enough for special family occasions.

SCREEN

With a 5-inch display it is functional enough to be used with one hand and large enough to be used as a media player. Everything on the display seems rather big and this is done on purpose – to make it a lot easier to use it. Icons and the keyboard are massive and take up a lot of the screen. It makes it easier to navigate through the UI. The display is a crisp 720p resolution, enough for you to do everything needed on a smartphone. Viewing angles are excellent at all angles and it is still readable in direct sunlight.

PERFORMANCE

Using Qualcomm Snapdragon 210 the 825 has a buttery-smooth interface. Flicking between pages and launching built-in apps is just as good as any high-end device. Snapdragon 210 is obviously for low end devices, and what it does for low end devices is bring the power of 4G. This is massive for the 825 as we were able to download apps in mere seconds using 4G. Installing them, however, is a bit of a process. It takes a while, quite a while to for



Despite not having the best camera, the 825 takes some decent pictures

the app icon to appear on screen. We had trouble at times and needed on one occasion to restart the device for installing apps, but this could really just be down to teething problems with a new device.

When pushing 825 in a gaming session, surprisingly we had no hiccups. *Asphalt 8* ran smoothly on medium settings. We did experience slow down when the screen got a bit too busy with carnage, but it wasn't game destroying. It performed better than the mid-range Huawei Mate S, which sports a Kirin 935 processor, yet we experienced dropped frame rates.

SOFTWARE

Here is where the Doro Liberto 825 really sells itself. Using a custom version of Lollipop 5.1.1 the UI is as said smooth and icons are screen invading (in a good way). It's almost unrecognisable but once you start

using it you can tell by the intuitiveness and speed that it's Android. Android still takes up a lot of storage space, with about 4.5GB left from the 8GB of internal memory. So a SD card is really recommended.

There is an assist button on the back of the 825, which is designed to be used in emergencies. If you're in a state that needs help, a push of the assist button will automatically contact a pre-list of contacts, to let them know you need help. It's advisable that you set this to be pressed three times for emergency, especially for those that like to fiddle.

My Doro Manager is the crowning jewel in the 825. It allows a chosen contact to remotely access the Liberto 825. You can transfer photos, contacts and more importantly send instructions. For those that find it hard to get to grasp with an already simple UI, My Doro Manager solves that easily by getting those more knowledgeable to lend a helping hand. There were rarely any hiccups in using My Doro Manager. It's intuitive and really simple to set up.

BATTERY

With a 2,000mAh battery the 825 can last you an age. How you may ask? Well with a combination of low specs and a 720p screen, there isn't a lot to guzzle the battery. With daily use our 825 lasted a few days without needing a charge. Half an hour of intensive gaming only drained the device of 13%. As a daily driver device you wouldn't have to worry about being caught out without a phone.

CONCLUSION

A smartphone definitely not for millennials and tech heads. One more for your grandparents who don't really need to play *Asphalt 8* on the highest setting or take high quality photos for likes on Instagram. Doro has designed a smartphone that really caters to those less intuitive in today's tech-heavy world. Unique features like My Doro Manager and a really easy interface makes it a device worth considering for your nan.

VERDICT

If you know someone who doesn't really need the latest in specs and only wants something that works, and works well, the Doro Liberto 825 is the perfect device. From the ground up the 825 is designed for usability. It will be hard for anyone to fail using the 825. Unique features like the assist button and My Doro Manager helps it stand out and it's not only there to look pretty. It works damn well.

- + Simple UI
- + My Doro Manager makes life easier
- + Assist button
- Not available on O2
- Camera isn't the best
- Can stutter due to the low processor

OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

INNOVATION

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★

HOW TO

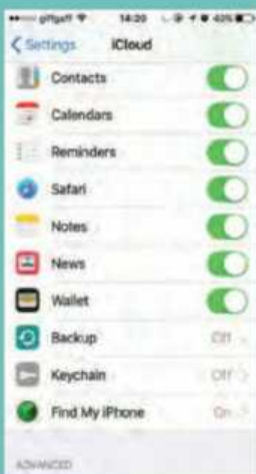
Migrate from iOS to Android

This month's guide is for those who are crossing over to Android from iOS. It's a tough decision, almost on par with dumping someone, in the rain, after you found out their dog died. Apple released Move to iOS on the Play Store a while ago, making it easy to move your stuff out of you ex's, sorry we mean your information from Android to iOS. No official app for the other way round exists yet so we here's our guide to do it, painlessly.



CONTACTS

1



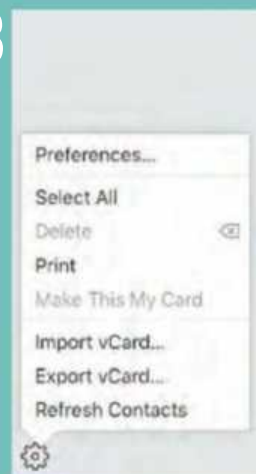
On your iOS device, make sure you sync your contacts to iCloud by going to settings > iCloud > enable 'contacts.'

2



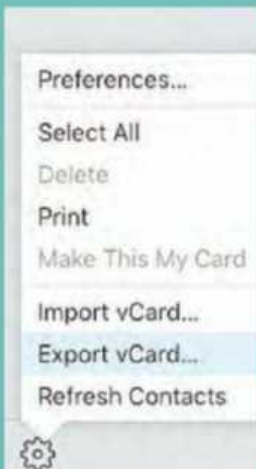
Log into your iCloud account on your web browser (preferably via a computer).

3



Highlight all of your contacts > click on the settings cog in the bottom left > select 'export vCard.'

4



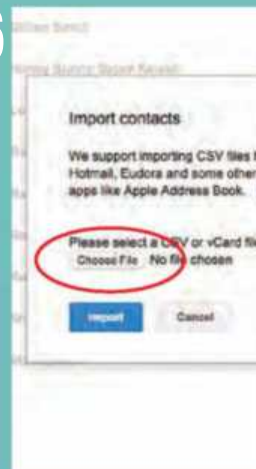
Your contacts will be condensed into a VCF file, ready to be imported.

5



If you haven't already, create a Google Account (if you have Gmail then you already have one).

6



Log into 'Google contacts' > import contacts > select 'choose files' and upload the VCF file.

Once the upload is complete, check your Android device and allow it to sync the imported calendar. Make sure it is connected to the Internet.

CALENDAR

- 1 Same manoeuvres as importing contacts. Take advantage of iCloud again and make sure you sync your calendar to iCloud. Settings > iCloud > enable 'calendar' if it isn't already.
- 2 Log into your iCloud account on your web browser.
- 3 In the top left are all your calendars. Annoyingly you'll have to download and import each one by one. Click on the Wi-Fi symbol next to your respective calendars.
- 4 A boxout called 'calendar sharing' will pop out > click 'public calendar' > copy and paste the link displayed beginning with 'webcal'.
- 5 Paste it into your web browser but don't hit enter just yet. Delete 'webcal' at the beginning of the link and replace with 'http'.
- 6 Hit enter and the ICS file should be in your download folder and it will be the file with gibberish as a name, eg 23bg.
- 7 Rename the file to calendar or something memorable (not necessary but helpful).
- 8 Sign into Google Calendar.
- 9 Click on the down arrow box next to 'other calendars' > import calendar > choose your calendar ics file > import.

The calendar on your Android device should be updated, please make sure your device is connected to the Internet.

MUSIC

- 1 If your songs are already on your computer, then all you have to do is copy and paste it into your new Android device.



Plug your Android device into your computer, open up your file and drop all of your music into the 'music' folder. If there isn't one just create one with the 'new folder' tab.



DEAL OR NO DEAL?

It's that time of year again and you know what that means right? Everybody is rushing to trade in their old handsets and take out deals on their shiny devices bought with that hard earned Christmas money. As such, you'll probably be wondering which contracts are worth putting your money into and which ones are quite frankly a waste of time. Well, you'll be pleased to know that *What Mobile* has once again got you covered with a fresh guide to the latest deals you can find this month.

1



WATCH FOR HIDDEN FEES

Phone companies love to hide things in the small print and contract prices are prime territory for hidden small print. Ensure that the contract is a fixed price and doesn't change after a set period (these are known as Tiered plans).

2



CHECK THE DATA POLICIES

Going over your data allowance is easy to do on smaller contracts, so it's worth knowing what happens if you reach the limit. Most networks now put a data 'cap' in place which stops you from using any online services and prompts you to buy a rescue pack, but you should check to be on the safe side.

3



DON'T FORGET THAT COOLING PERIOD

The Consumer Credit Act gives everyone the right to cancel their contract within the first 14 days without penalty. If you change your mind at any point during this time, simply send a letter in writing confirming your withdrawal. Waiting longer than this will incur nasty cancellation fees.


4



KNOW YOUR CANCELLATION RIGHTS

It's easy for networks to pull you into their webs for the long-haul, so you need to know where you stand in the event your monthly costs start getting a bit too much. Many phone networks will charge you the remainder of the contract in one up-front fee if you decide to pull out early.

BEST SIM ONLY DEALS

 First Second Notable mention	30 DAY Rolling contract: best budget option	30 DAY Rolling contract: moderate usage option	30 DAY Rolling contract: best heavy usage option
	GIFF GAFF (£7.50 per month – 250 minutes, Unlimited texts, 500mb data, 4G Yes)	VIRGIN MOBILE (£15 per month – Unlimited minutes and texts, 4GB data 4G Business customers only)	GIFF GAFF (£20 per month – Unlimited minutes, texts and data – 6GB at 4G speed, rest is 3G 4G Yes)
	VIRGIN MOBILE (£8 per month – 1250 minutes, unlimited texts, 500mb data, 4G Business customers only)	ID (£15 per month – 2000 minutes, 5000 texts, 6GB data 4G Yes)	ID (£20 per month – 2000 minutes, 5000 texts, 10GB data 4G Yes)
	ID (£7.50 per month – 250 minutes, 5000 texts, 2GB data, 4G Yes)	GIFF GAFF (£15 per month – 1,000 minutes, unlimited texts, 4GB data 4G Yes)	THREE (£25 per month – 600 minutes, unlimited texts, 12GB data 4G Yes)

BEST CONTRACT SMARTPHONE

★ DEAL OF THE MONTH

Apple iPhone 6s 64GB from O2: (£31 per month – £75 upfront cost, unlimited minutes, unlimited texts, 3Gb data 4G Yes)



Contract length: 24 months

Availability: Online

Use voucher code: TRJANSALE02

The best iPhone deal on the internet by far. Resist slightly cheaper deals which favour the 16GB version and opt for this one if you want the phone to last long term.

CHEAPEST CONTRACT SMARTPHONE

★ DEAL OF THE MONTH

Microsoft Lumia 535 from iD: (£5 per month – FREE upfront cost, 150 minutes, 5000 texts, 250mb data 4G Yes)



Contract length: 24 months

Availability: Online

The cheapest contract currently available for any device, the Microsoft Lumia 535 is a solid budget offering making its first jump into smartphones.

TOUCHED FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

All around you people are getting married or having children, while you're just sitting there considering life as a hermit or how cats can technically be your children, if you believe enough. Before you consider those options maybe you should give Internet dating a go. It's no longer a taboo, people will not vilify you like a pervert for scrolling through pics of Jess/James from Dalston. Now you can do it anywhere thanks to the technological revolution of the smartphone. One can still happily find his/her future love interest on the bus, at a coffee shop and now on the toilet. Saying the latter a few years ago and people would have looked at you like some sort of sexual deviant.

We've put together another comprehensive list, this time for you lusty folk. What you see in front of you are dating apps that are worth your attention, and some not so much. Compiling this list has been an awkward, draining and arthritis-causing experience. But above all it has been fun and quite eye-opening to be a part of this new age of human interaction. Gone are the days of approaching someone that catches your eye, instead you'll be hoping to "happn" upon them. Finding love isn't easy, it still isn't despite the massive leg up technology has provided for us. Now go on out there and discover your inner Carrie Bradshaw. If you're a Miranda, well go you, just be safe.



Tinder

iOS and Android/Free
(in-app purchases)

4
/5



Starting off with the dating app of the moment, Tinder has brought online dating to the mainstream to a point where it is now a verb. "Tindering" is common practice and is dangerously close to being the verb to describe all dating apps. Tinder has forced itself into the public consciousness by being unashamedly shallow. Swiping left and right will always be associated with Tinder and that's all you have to really do to start having some fun. The days of Tindering all day are no longer as recent updates have implemented a cap on the amount of profiles you can like.

Tinder on Android proves to be quite buggy, or maybe Kendra from Chelsea is really that persistent. Aside from repeating profiles, Tinder also has a problem with a fundamental feature — messaging. We found difficulty replying to messages at times, eventually we figured out a ritual to send a simple "hello", which involved restarting the app several

times, appointing ourselves as a muezzin and chanting a smartphone version of the adhan. When it does work Tinder is effective. Whether you get a date is up to you. We also found Tinder to have a lot more choice, unsurprisingly.





Bumble

iOS and Android/Free

4 ¹/₅



We hate and love Bumble. Definitely the most unique out of the bunch as it forces women to initiate conversation first. That's right fellas, no more will you have to Google cheesy pickup lines or memorise God-awful puns. Now the shoe is on the other foot and all you have to do is chill. Well you can if you are reasonably attractive. If you're somewhat average like the *What Mobile* team, you might be waiting a while.

The app itself is responsive although a bit slow for those who like to go on swiping marathons. One annoying thing is how once in a while the app wants to remind you about 'backtrack', which allows you to go back to the previous profile you swiped left to. Quite obnoxious, stop it you bumbling app (it can be turned off, too late we're already annoyed). Swiping for the same sex takes away Bumble's unique trait, with either side able to start the conversation.



Hinge

iOS and Android/Free
(in-app purchases)

4 ¹/₅



'People You May Know' on Facebook is an intriguing area. It's probably the place where most of us spend time on Facebook, delving into the unknown, looking at photos and statuses of friends of friends. What if you can date these people? Hinge has your back as it connects you to people within your network. Meaning you can get a character reference of the person you're about to meet, which really helps to gain a connection.

Every day you get 13 new profiles to closely inspect. Hinge is also going the opposite way of Tinder, encouraging quality over quantity. The app is solid, extremely responsive with some decent features. If you're a Facebook addict with lots of pictures, Hinge allows up to 16 pictures to be uploaded onto your profile (just don't go crazy with shirtless selfies). It is extremely easy to set up, with the only effort coming from writing that blasted bio about yourself.





Coffee Meets Bagel

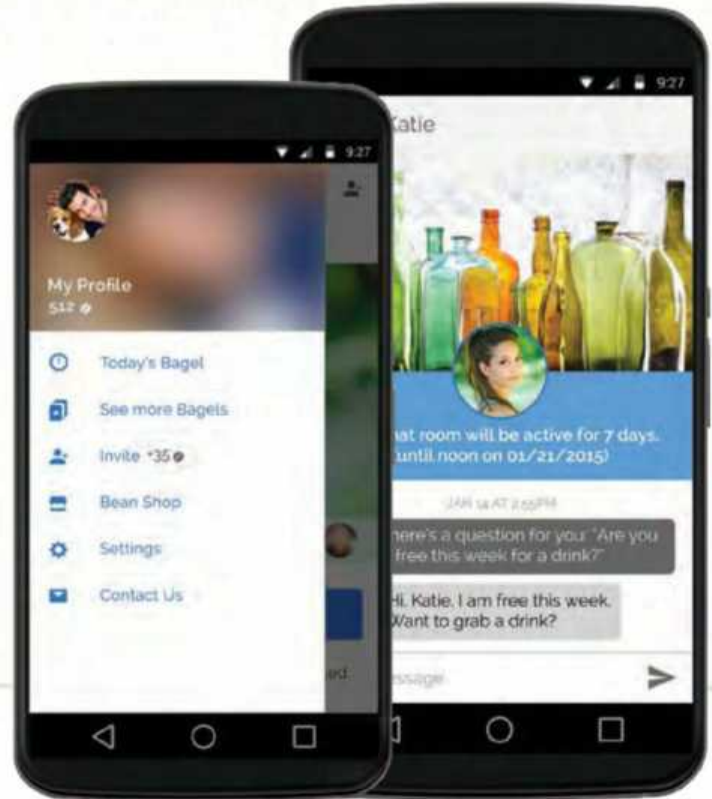
iOS and Android/Free
(in-app purchases)

4/5



Coffee Meets Bagel incorporates the sense of currency into its ecosystem. You are given coffee beans every day, more through sharing the app on social media, and of course you can buy some. Sadly buying a plot of land in Columbia and enforcing child slavery won't get you infinite beans. At first it seems a bit unfair to be so limited but the limitation forces you to be more picky with your choice. Feels quite seedy... which one is worth your beans?

You are given one match (bagel) a day. That's right, only one for you to mull over and decide whether he/she is worth a coffee and bagel. If that's not enough you can spend your beans in 'give and take', where you can like a profile, which they will be notified on. Coffee Meets Bagel is one for those done with having fun and looking for fun.



POF Plenty of Fish

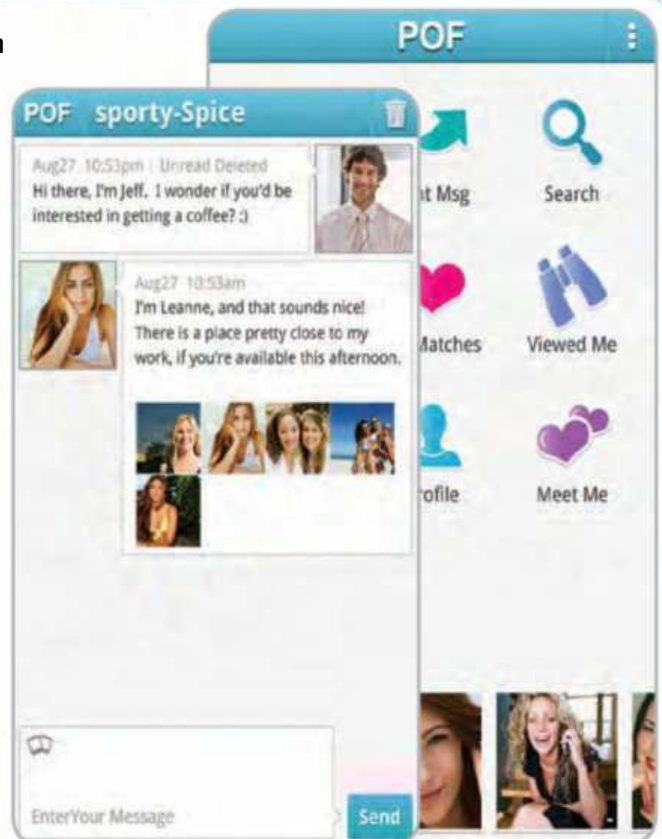
iOS and Android/Free
(in-app purchases)

3/5



Something is fishy about Plenty of Fish and it's not actual fish. POF is the world's largest dating site with more than 90 million registered users. So the numbers game is there, you're more likely to find someone to connect with on POF. But you'll have to wade through a lot of frogs before you get your catch of the day. The reason for this is because POF offers more advanced searching for the magical price of free. Competitors like Zoosk and Match would demand £29.99 a month to find someone who likes pets, doesn't smoke and enjoys a spoon.

POF still has in-app purchases to tempt you with, 'meet me' is POF's take on Tinder's no likey no swipey, with the difference being price. Have no fear, you won't have to pay the £39.99 a month if you're on iOS. Why you ask? Because the app is poorly built with an exploit. When a match happens it'll appear on your notifications and reveal the username of the person who wants to meet you. Simply search their name and start messaging them. Simple.





Happn

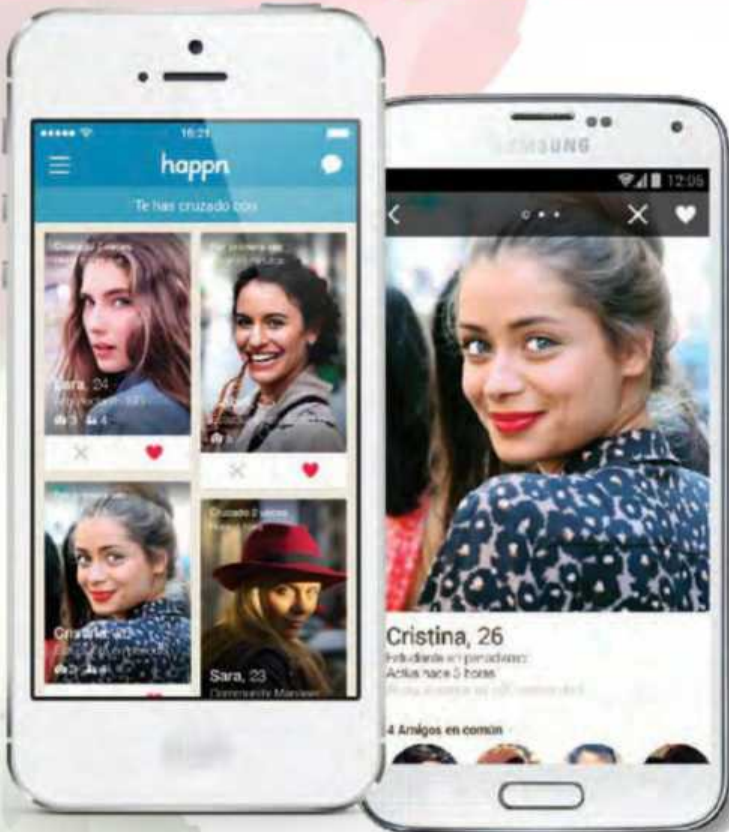
iOS and Android/Free
(in-app purchases)

3.5
/5



A dating app that requires you to be out and about, well... that's what Happn wants you to think. Happn works using your location, displaying people who you have 'happned' upon during your travels. If you live in London there are 300,000 Happn users for you to cross paths with. It's a romantic idea to cross eyes with a beautiful stranger and then seeing her again in bed, on your phone. It works particularly well if you live in the heart of London with an endless stream of faces for you to choose from.

Happn takes a leaf out of Coffee Meets Bagel with in-app credit, which helps you gain the attention of anyone that you particularly want to date. You spend the credits to charm the object of your affection, quite like how magpies flirt. Users can send voice notes to get a better sense of each other's personality.



Grindr

iOS and Android/Free

3.5
/5



First review on the Play Store: "Very easy to use and it totally did what it was supposed to do... it found me some dick!" Pretty much sums up Grindr. Grindr is the app to use to meet gay and bisexual men for dates and whatever else comes to mind. Grindr's layout looks like as if Pornhub and Tinder had a baby, a baby that enjoys phallic imagery popping up in its notifications.

Grindr doesn't really give you the means to look for the one, more showing you what's available there and now. By using your location Grindr will show you 100 guys closest to you. It's quick and easy, no galleries to go through, just a profile pic and the means to message your target. Sending photos is allowed, very unique for a dating app. The app is responsive and you will be chatting with someone almost straight away.



THE SURPRISING, THE P



Tastebuds

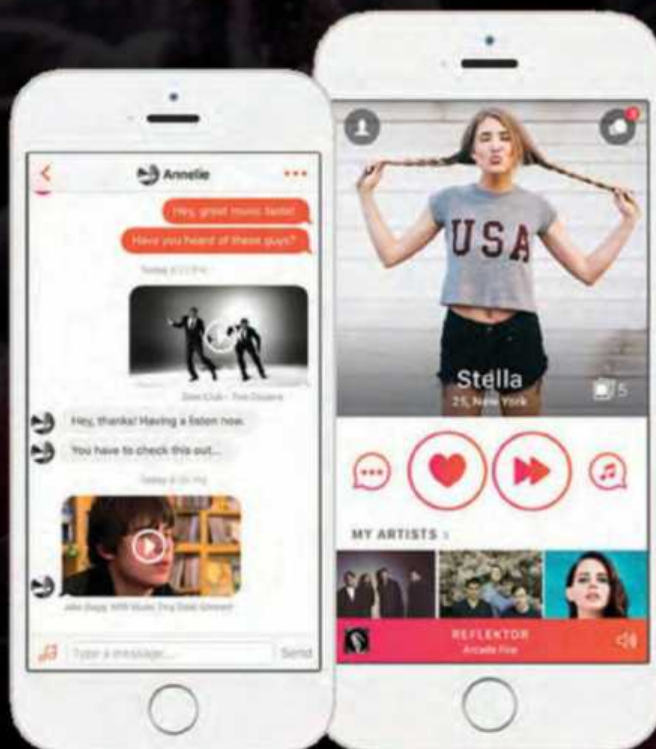
iOS and Android/Free

4/5



Audiophiles rejoice as you can now find each it easier to make sweet, beautiful music together. Not as good as randomly seeing each other in a crowd at a gig, with your favourite band playing their slowest song, and spontaneously making out with each other. In case that doesn't ever happen we got Tastebuds.

The central theme of Tastebuds if you haven't worked it out by now is music. You're asked music central questions and you can send YouTube links to whoever you fancy, to get their attention (do not send I Wanna Sex You Up). The forward button deceptively looks like a back button, it's actually a dislike button and we've obviously been indoctrinated by Tinder. Starting off a conversation is incredibly easy due to common interest and the app will serenade you as you swipe. A well built app to help you serenade.



Sizzl

iOS/Free

3/5



Probably the most niche app on the list. Sizzl brings everyone together over their love of bacon. Yes you read right, bacon. It's a real app created by meat production company Oscar Mayer. If that name rings a bell that means you remember your *Simpsons*. Sing it with me: "If I were an Oscar Meyer Weiner, everyone would be in love with meeeeeee."

Sizzl uses that swipe left and right user interface employed by almost every app available – although it's a bit sluggish. Instead of swiping you'll be sizzling your potential match by holding down on the gristly heart icon. If you really desire them press down firmly for s crispy finish. It's the bare basic of dating apps and sometimes simple just works. The charcoal black and flame colour scheme hasn't got us craving bacon just yet. We're still scouring for the subliminal marketing.



RANDY AND THE WEIRD



Bristlr

iOS and Android/Free
(in-app purchases)

3/5

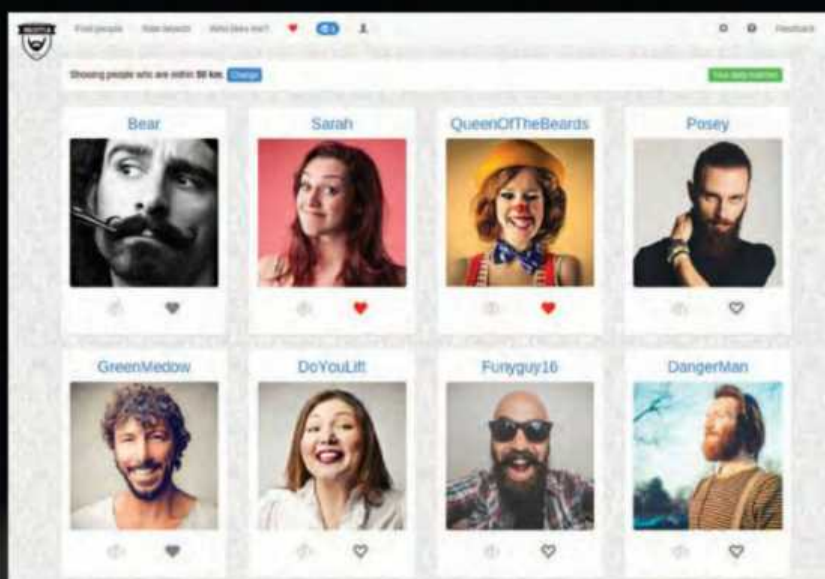


Beards have become a massive cultural icon. No more are they reserved for old men, pervy men, dirty men and bearded female circus performers. You couldn't

move for beards nowadays in London, if we got a pound for every beard we saw, we wouldn't need advertisers. Bristlr caters to pognophiles or, in other words, beard lovers. If you're a man who wants to find another man who loves beards as much as you do, Bristlr is just for you. Bristlr also caters for the ladies too, as ladies can also peruse over which fuzzy face they want to molest.

Bristlr has been out for over a year but it works like it's still

in beta. The general user interface is really sluggish, not what we're used to. Aside from the lag it does cater to fuzz lovers well, with a wee bit of patience you can find your Leonidas, or Gandalf depending on your taste.



Fuzzy Banter

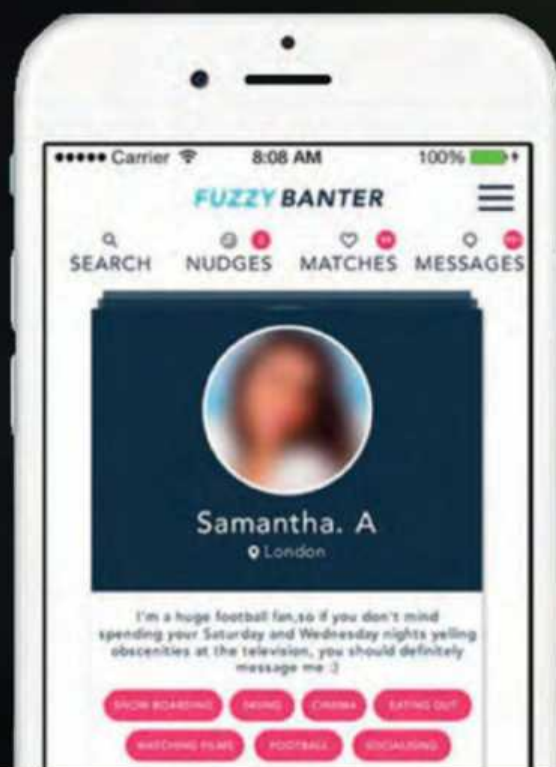
iOS and Android/Free

3/5



What makes Fuzzy Banter stand out from all the others is that it is the only dating app to be endorsed by Danny Dyer, who describes it "like Tinder. But with more bollocks and mystery :)". More the former Danny, more the former. Fuzzy is in the name because it encourages you to fuzz your profile picture, only revealing it to whoever you match with. This is done to try and encourage people to like each other for the things that they have in common. So basically it's like Tinder but allows you to look back on all the people you 'nudged'.

It differs more from Tinder by being quite badly built. Swiping left or right is laggy with the touch interface being exceptionally poor. We had to be careful where we touched. If you touched accidentally touch too far left on the screen you could be discarding your dream girl.



DOES YOUR MOBILE RULE YOUR LIFE?

It's easy to argue that smartphone addiction has gotten out of hand. We're using our mobile devices more than ever before, with our virtual lives becoming ever more important when compared with our physical ones. Still, the whole argument about whether smartphone addiction is actually a real condition or something altogether less intense is definitely up for debate, as most people who use their phones on a daily basis would probably argue that the effects are different to that of a conventional 'addiction'. With mobile-centric apps such as Instagram and Snapchat respectively receiving roughly 400,000,000 hits per day according to Kantar, it raises the question of whether our usage increase is down to simple penetration growth or being unable to detach from our beloved candy bars.

**'SYMPTOMS OF
NOMOPHOBIA INCLUDE A
FEELING OF ANXIETY, PANIC
OR DESPERATION ANYTIME
YOU DON'T HAVE ACCESS
TO A SMARTPHONE'**

IS IT EVEN AN ADDICTION?

Let's start off with a bit of a history lesson first and outline the obvious: people have been saying things like this for years. They've said it about the internet and they've said it about gaming, both of which turned out to be false. In the future, they will no doubt say the same thing about virtual reality too. While there are rare cases of internet and gaming addiction, there's also numerous success stories about how both technology mediums have helped save people's lives. People like Ken Worrall, who has Tetraplegia, may spend a lot of time glued to their screens gaming and streaming it to viewers, but it gives them an outlet to express themselves. We spoke to Jim McClellan, a lecturer at the University of Westminster and former internet culture writer for the *Guardian*, who pretty much confirmed this and more. "It happens with any new form of technology. If you really want to get historical, it's happened with novels and books too. In the 18th and 19th century there was slight panic about people getting addicted to novels and reading."

He's right too. A quick Google search for VR addiction yields a ton of results, with all of the popular websites firing off the same spiel regarding dopamine release and the risk/reward pleasure we get from it. Problem is, we get that from pretty much any task in life including our jobs and relationships. Case in point, is smartphone addiction really a thing?

WHAT IS SMARTPHONE ADDICTION?

In a basic sense, you can put internet and smartphone addiction under the same umbrella as the effects essentially roll up into one. Thanks to neuroscience, it is now possible to understand what happens when people use their mobile devices. Much like smoking, cocaine or anything that effects your dopamine levels, it turns out there's also a certain pleasure to be had from checking your handset.

'Nomophobia', as it's now officially called, is short for no-mobile-phone phobia and carries its own list

of symptoms. They include a feeling of anxiety, panic or desperation anytime you don't have access to a smartphone/ the battery runs out, detachment from the world around you when using your mobile device, or having to check for notifications at unhealthy regular intervals. The term was coined after a 2010 study by YouGov showed that 53% of mobile phone users in the UK felt anxious when they lost their phone or couldn't use it because of low battery/ signal issues.

Dopamine is that feel-good chemical that our brain releases when something pleasurable happens. With relation to smartphones and technology, this could be anything from getting a 'like' on a comment you posted, to getting a message off that person you really like. The ability to check your phone so quickly and efficiently, combined with the repetitive nature of doing so, is an addict's dream. It is exactly the same reason that gambling works so well; studies from the University of Cambridge have shown that the act of rolling Blackjack dice or pulling a handle on a slot machine actually increases a person's interest in the game.

Adding to this is the elusive 'flow', which is when



your body is running at its optimal peak. During 'flow', the brain gets high on a neurochemical cocktail of norepinephrine, dopamine, endorphins, anandamide and serotonin. If you've ever become completely engrossed in something for several hours and completely forgotten where the time went, chances are you've experienced this phenomenon for yourself.

From a scientific point of view, very few people actually suffer from true smartphone addiction. Kantar estimates that around 28% of the UK population use their device every day for things such as social media,

adolescents are altogether more vulnerable to its effects. It is important to note that a lot of the addictive traits surrounding smartphones aren't just from the person themselves but rather the design of the software they're using on it. McClellan goes on to say, "So much money is spent on making those things we see on screen engaging and compelling."

"It's important to remember these things have been designed by the best user-interface designers in the world to be engaging and compelling."

With most of our children now using social media in

will ultimately be outgrown. Unlike an actual drug, there is no real dependency to it, meaning when you roll round to being an adult it's more than likely you'll grow out of it and simply 'mature'. It is important to remember that drugs kick these chemicals out in much higher doses over a shorter space of time, meaning the potential for addiction is far higher. Ultimately, a lot of the addictive qualities found in smartphones relate to a finding of one's self and the search for a relevant place in society – be it virtual or physical.

McClellan says, "When you're younger, it's a little

'MUCH LIKE SMOKING OR COCAINE, IT TURNS OUR THERE'S A CERTAIN PLEASURE TO BE HAD FROM CHECKING YOUR HANDSET'

but the likelihood of getting cold sweats and gnawing pain when you've been away from your handset for 24 hours is obviously highly unlikely. Real-world cases of actual smartphone addiction are incredibly rare, though they do happen. The majority of these tend to occur in the teenage category, which coincidentally is also the most addicted group. Figures from Ofcom in 2011 revealed that almost half of all UK teenagers owned a smartphone, compared with just 27% of adults.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

While adults tend to be generally more careful about social media and its effects, teenagers and young

some shape and form, perhaps we should shift focus to the tools at which they have at their disposal, rather than simply blaming the smartphone as a whole. Imran Choudhary, a consumer analyst for Kantar, thinks it's unfair to solely blame the handset.

"If these services didn't exist, then there would be less desire to spend as much time as we do on our Smartphones."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

With teenagers the primary culprit of smartphone addiction, what is the end result for those who could be classified as addicted? Simple. The whole thing is basically a cycle that, like with most physical mediums,

harder to have that strong sense of self and exert that control. You're still trying to learn about things and who your friends are. When you get older, you're in a better position to make clear decisions about what you want to do and how to spend your time".

The stats don't lie either – with 86% of teenagers using Facebook versus 53% of adults and just 5% of adults using Snapchat versus 45% of teenagers, according to Kantar. In layman's terms, the older you get, the more responsibilities you have and thus things such as social media and online presence become less important, which is no doubt one of the main drivers for our current perception of 'addiction'.



Lord of the Spies...

Steve Lord is a White Hat hacker and runs his own company, Mandalorian Security Services Ltd. With over a decade of experience on information security, he works for good and would choose to destroy the Sith, not join them. Join us every month as he gives his view on the world of privacy.

Save ££££s with the ultimate in-car computer

Tools like GPS, MP3 players, dashcams and even breakdown call services are becoming increasingly common among drivers, but unless they come with your car, the cost of fitting them can be quite expensive. Last month I wrote about the things you can do with old handsets, but this month I want to show you how you can replace all these tools with an old phone and save a small fortune in the process.

Useful GPS

Using apps such as 'TomTom UK and Ireland' with an inexpensive car mount can turn your old phone into a very useful GPS. If you keep it charged while you're driving, you'll also get the benefit of a breakdown phone to call 999, even without a SIM, in the UK. This is on top of the usual GPS and music capabilities that an old handset offers. Dashcam is a free iPhone app that does exactly what it says on the tin. Android users can try CaroO Pro and even Windows Phone users can use Action Cam.



Watch out thieves

Granted your current phone can easily do all of the above, but how about using your old device as an anti-theft device? Using Apple's Find My iPhone app, the Android Device Manager or Windows Find my Phone, you can use your handset as a beacon to find your car in the most labyrinthine of shopping centres. Equally, if your car gets stolen, you'll be able to use the handset to help the police recover it, all for the price of a SIM-only deal.

Hackers get new toys

Being that it's sort of my profession, of course my favourite use for an older phone is as a hacking platform. Hacker group Offensive Security has released version 3 of its popular NetHunter mobile hacking toolkit. If you have an old Nexus device and want to learn more, head over to the Kali website to download it.



Britain's secret surveillance exposed

VICE News has uncovered the secret mobile surveillance systems used by British police and security agencies to track phones by location, intercept calls, snoop on messages and watch data over the mobile network.



This video on 'IMSI catchers' and police surveillance is well worth a watch and can be seen on the VICE News website under the name 'Britains Secret Surveillance'.



phone.
service

centre

If, like Charlie, you have splashed out on a brand spanking new mobile phone and promptly dropped it in the street where it was run over by a passing mobility scooter, don't despair. Just follow these **5 easy steps** to mobile salvation...



01

Stop crying.

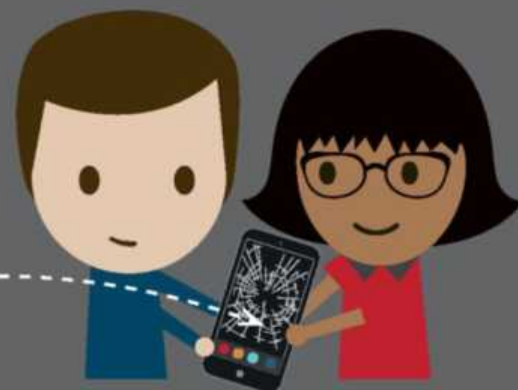
It's OK. Really. These things happen and can easily be fixed...



02

Head for the Phone Service Centre.

Check online at phoneservicecentre.co.uk for details.



03

Hand over the phone...

Just pass it over to one of our expert technicians who will assess the damage.



05

Take back your shiny repaired phone

and resume your digital life...



04

Relax

Sit down, relax, have a cup of coffee and enjoy the peace and quiet for 40 minutes whilst your screen is fixed.

Visit our London store: 68 Welbeck Street W1G 0AS **Nearest tubes:** Bond St or Oxford Circus

New Stores are popping up all the time, please check our website for further details phoneservicecentre.co.uk

If you'd like to join our franchise please get in touch on franchise@phoneservicecentre.co.uk

or call us on **0333 999 7927**

Taking a Liberty

Cruise the mean streets of Liberty City as another popular GTA title comes to mobile platforms

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories

(Android and iOS) £4.99

GTA is back once again with the mobile version of its popular PSP title. The game transports you to the popular setting of Liberty City (aka New York), where you must complete missions to unravel more of the stellar plot. With virtual controls that are identical to those found on the portable versions of *GTA 3* and *Vice City*, you'll either love them or hate them... But who cares when the gameplay is just so damn good.



Harvest Moon: Seeds of Memories

(Android and iOS) £7.99

It has taken almost 20 years but we finally have an official *Harvest Moon* farming sim on mobile devices. It's a shame that the game feels far too shallow to really bear the moniker. Non-playable characters are lifeless and the graphics are average at best.



Pocket Mortys

(Android and iOS) Free (in-app purchases)

Just when you thought Rick and Morty couldn't get any weirder, along comes *Pocket Mortys* to shock us all. Capture a bunch of alternate Mortys from another dimension using the old-school Pokémon battle formula. Some of the jokes fall a little flat but the classic gaming formula helps to make this a great commuter title.



Venture Kid

(Android and iOS) £0.79

A spiritual successor to MegaMan at heart, *Venture Kid* is a beautiful looking side-scrolling 8-bit platformer with a fierce difficulty. Dodgy on-screen buttons make the title almost feel like an emulator, while the hordes of enemies will have you tearing sizeable clumps of hair from your scalp. It's a mean game but you'll definitely have fun playing it.



Star Trek Timelines

(Android and iOS) Free (in-app purchases)

There's a certain stigma about *Star Trek* being a bit geeky but even so this is a game that is well worth your attention. Featuring characters from every series of the American sci-fi entertainment franchise, due to a temporal shift bringing the past and present together, the game features full real-time battling sequences and excellent 3D graphics.



MMA Federation

(Android and iOS) Free (in-app purchases)

Let's get this out of the way: this is not a real-time fighter. It's a card battler where you essentially juggle attacking and defensive moves to get critical hits and down your opponent. There's quite a lot of depth to it, with perks and a stamina system to take into account. If you fancy a different type of fighting game, this is worth a look.



BattleHand

(Android and iOS) Free (in-app purchases)

We are not the biggest fans of in-app purchases at *What Mobile* and *BattleHand* takes the biscuit a little too much at times. Not only is this card battler heavily convoluted and difficult to understand, but the gold balance is purposely done in a way that forces you to spend in order to stay competitive at higher levels. A wasted gem.



TMNT – Portal Power

(iOS only) £2.99

Based on the popular *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* Nickelodeon TV show, *Portal Power* is a beat-em-up that puts you in control of all four Ninja Turtles at once. Switching between characters is as simple as a swipe of the finger, while battles require a keen eye to avoid being overwhelmed during later levels.



Tower of Fortune 3

(iOS only) £2.29

The newest *Tower of Fortune* title goes full colour but still retains its 16-bit charm, as players battle monsters using a chance-based slots system. This mechanic is an essential part of the game, with everything from loot to actions defined by the spin of the slots. It's a unique feature that really helps this title stand out versus other titles.



Smurfs Epic Run

(iOS only) Free (in-app purchases)

An endless runner that is pretty standard, *Smurfs Epic Run* is nonetheless a fun title while it lasts. Simply tap the screen to jump and hold it to fly. Various obstacles are dotted in your way to avoid, with each level lasting only a couple of minutes. Great for the morning commute but ultimately a little forgettable.



Step into the Dojo

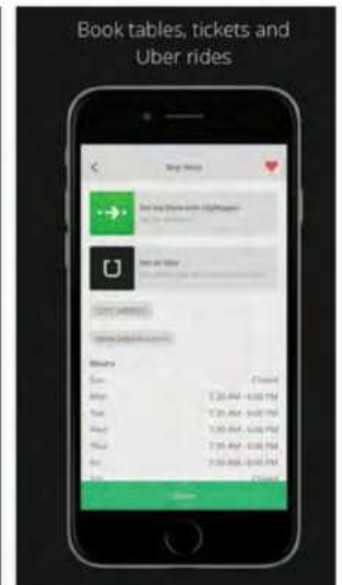
The latest iOS and Android apps include finding the best stuff to do and the latest gig trackers

Reviewer: Manny Pham – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Dojo

(Android and iOS) Free

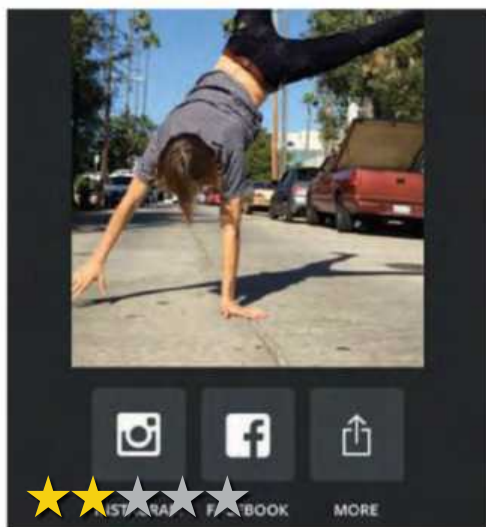
Another app to help you decide what to do after work and at the weekend in London. What Dojo does well is keeping it black and white, literally too. Flicking through the app you can tell how well made it is. Most thumbnails are animated to catch your eye. Dojo has a huge array of events for you to choose from and a handy 'collection' feature, for you to save all events you wish to attend, and remember. London can get a bit too much, keep your head above water with Dojo.



Boomerang From Instagram

(Android and iOS) Free

A simple app that could have been included in an update. Capture a video of, for example, you using a boomerang, the app will rewind and forward the clip in a loop to produce a funny effect. You'll get bored of it quickly.



Yahoo Weather

(Android and iOS) Free

Yahoo Weather has had a major overhaul. It offers hour-by-hour weather prediction and will warn you of severe weather conditions. There's an interactive map for heat and wind, displaying where to avoid. It feels like you're getting a lot for a free app. For us simpler people, it will warn us to stay dry.



Bandsintown

(Android and iOS) Free

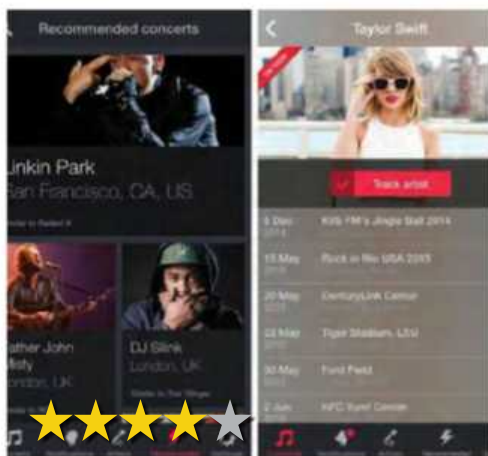
The first of two gig trackers on this list. Bandsintown deserves a mention as it's more social than Songkick. Aside from tracking your favourite artists, Bandsintown will also track your friends to see which gigs they've committed to go to! Tickets can be bought through the app to ensure you get tickets first.



Songkick

(Android and iOS) Free

One of our favourite apps of all time. With Songkick you will never miss a gig by your favourite artist. Songkick has now received an update which enables it to scan your music more deeply and your Spotify list. Be the first to an in-demand gig with Songkick, you can buy tickets straight from the app with the likes of Ticketmaster.



DabKick

(Android and iOS) Free

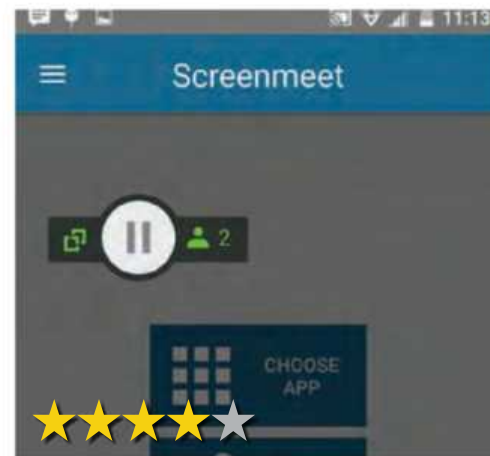
It's a bit annoying when you have to play a funny video you found to your mates multiple times because someone had to go toilet and another was getting a round in. But now this can be avoided as DabKick allows you to share a video with friends and chat at the same time. You can also voice chat during the video or not be rude and stick to typing.



ScreenMeet

(Android only) Free 4

If you're that person who everyone comes to for technical help with their smartphones, ScreenMeet will save you a lot of time, hassle and effort. ScreenMeet basically displays whatever you got going on in your phone. Your less techy friends can view via a URL sent through Facebook, email and text message.



Erudite

(Android only) Free

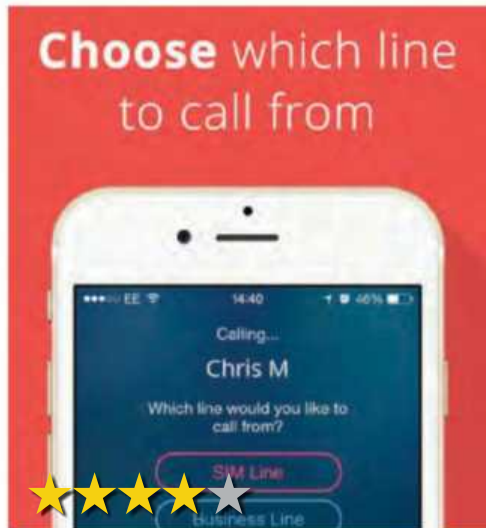
They say you should learn something new every day to keep the old brain working. With Erudite you can pick up basic Spanish, French, Italian, Portugese, Dutch, Greek, Chinese, Japanese and much more. Erudite keeps you engaged with flashcards, phrasebooks and a handy translator. Simple and funny to use.



Swytch

(Android and iOS) Free in-app purchases

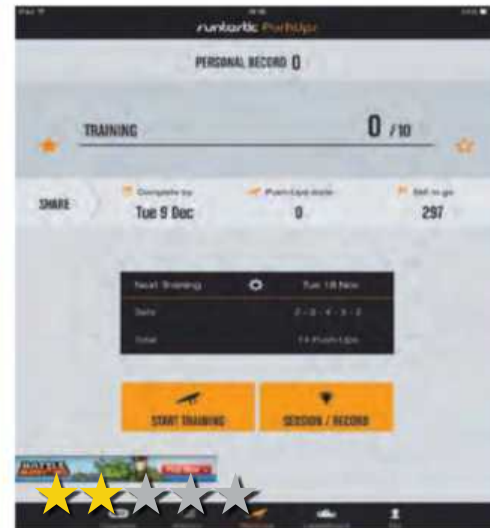
Tired of having multiple phones on you for different numbers? Swytch allows users to have multiple numbers without additional SIM cards. Right now you get a free number for six months as a launch incentive, after which it'll cost £4.99 a month, £14.99 for six months or £24.99 for a year.



Runtastic Push Ups

(Android and iOS) Free in-app purchases

Want to get rid of that pigeon chest? Well you may want to just join a gym or do push ups without Runtastic Push Ups. The app interface is excellent but very limited unless you upgrade to pro for £1.99, which will unlock reminders and exercise tracking for the whole year.



Nintendo 3DS

Paper and 3D worlds collide in the latest outing for our favourite Italian plumber and sidekick

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Mario & Luigi: Paper Jam Bros.

Publisher: Nintendo **Developer:** AlphaDream

Where to buy: In-Store **Cost:** £29.99 ★★★★★

Quietly announced during the Nintendo Digital event at E3, *Mario & Luigi: Paper Jam Bros.* is a combination of two highly received games melded into what, in theory at least, should be the makings of a great partnership.

Fans of the original games were quite eager to see what *Paper Mario* crossed with *Mario & Luigi* would actually work like, so we are happy to say that it has worked surprisingly well. Even though the graphical style is clearly more towards the *Mario & Luigi* camp, the overall presentation is great and the two different styles are intertwined pretty effortlessly.

The story is pretty straightforward and centres on Luigi being his typical clumsy self (as seems the normal portrayal of him these days). While moving around in the basement of Peach's Castle, he somehow manages to knock a mysterious book off the shelf, causing the two worlds to merge.

What ensues is a ton of paper-thin Koopas, Goombas and the like inhabiting the lands to cause some chaos. Obviously, this creates quite a funny parallel, as we now have both paper and 3D variants of each character inhabiting the same universe. As such, seeing some of the conversations between both parties is quite entertaining and should give most Nintendo fanboys a good laugh.

Gameplay is pretty much as you would expect. Yet another

combination of both formulas. We would probably say that in this respect it is more *Paper Mario* than *Mario & Luigi*. The turn-based battle system has been carried over in its entirety and you now have the addition of *Paper Mario* as a fresh character. Each one is mapped to one of three buttons; A, B and Y respectively.

There is also a new card battling system, which rewards players who are doing well with some random abilities ranging from healing to additional damage capabilities. For newbies this could be a little overwhelming, so it's nice to see that game developer AlphaDream has included a fully skippable set of tutorials for those who need educating on the basics.

It is a real shame, then, that the RPG elements feel so stripped back. Aside from the funny interactions between the game's key characters, there is not an awful lot going on in the Mushroom Kingdom. Non-playable characters with zero personality inhabit the lands with little to say, while the surprisingly linear main questline does not help either. We couldn't quite shake the feeling that there seems to be a real abundance of seemingly identical Toad villages that feel like storyline padding. At 30 hours, we can see some people getting a little bored towards the end.

With the combat feeling so stellar and natural, AlphaDream has very nearly succeeded in developing a very good crossover title.

Unfortunately, the lack of a deeper and more interesting main questline cannot be fully shrouded behind the presence of a promising initial story concept. You could argue that the more simplistic approach has its benefits but for some players, they will undoubtedly be left wanting a little more from the game than it can actually deliver.



Lionel City Builder 3D: Rise of the Rails



Publisher: Big John Games **Developer:** Big John Games

Where to buy: Nintendo e-Shop **Cost:** (\$4.99) £3.50

We suppose it is difficult to get excited about a train simulator, so when we heard of latest arrival, *Rise of the Rails*, there wasn't much buzz in the office. With quite a few train simulators to choose from already available on the 3DS, it had quite a challenge if it was to really stand out.

Starting from the main menu, you are given two gameplay modes with each one offering a different taste. Story Mode is essentially a glorified tutorial, with 16 levels that aim to show you how things work. You are not obligated to complete it and, to be honest, it is a little on the simplistic side anyway. Tasks range from transporting objects to picking up passengers and clearing the tracks... hardly cutting-edge stuff and there is little in the way of actual story to justify its name. Where the real meat lies in this game would be the Creative Mode, where you are given free will to create and populate a full-length stretch of railroad.

Creative Mode differs from the more basic Story Mode because you actually have to keep your inhabitants happy, which means transporting them to and from work while also ensuring they can eat. You also given full control of camera in this mode, which for some reason was completely omitted from the story mode.

Obliviously, then, this is one of those games that really depends on how you approach it. As a pick-up-and-play title, the Creative Mode works tremendously well, though those who want a true story mode should look elsewhere.



My Pets



Publisher: Neopica **Developer:** Neopica

Where to buy: Nintendo e-Shop **Cost:** \$24.99 (£17.50)

After the success of *Nintendogs* (and cats), there seemed to be an apparent burst of pet games onto the handheld market. *My Pets* is another addition to the line-up and, to be honest, is a bit of a mess. In a game that prioritises cuteness and is supposed to make you feel a connection with your virtual companions, it is a bit hard to do so when each of the animals looks like it is wearing one of the others as a sort of 'death mask'. Some of the models are downright awful and your only option will be to hide them under mountains of 'funny' accessories such as hats and sunglasses.

Then we get to the gameplay, which is average at best. Taking care of your pet feels like a chore but only because we have seen it all before so many times in the past. Admittedly, it is difficult to make things such as washing your pet's fur and feeding them much different to other titles, though it would nice to see a little change from the usual 'cut in a circular motion to open a tin of food' etc.

Much like *Nintendogs*, taking your pet for walks is one of the more fun areas outside of micro-managing its every whim, although it does differ slightly because you can earn hefty cash from it. Your little companion will often find money and presents scattered around outside that, being the apathetic thief you are, you will *happily* take home with no remorse whatsoever. A poor man's *Nintendogs* clone we're afraid.

PlayStation Vita

An old indie classic remains full of life on a console that is on its last legs

Reviewer: Manny Pham – for full reviews, check out WhatMobile.net

Bastion



Developer: Supergiant Games **Publisher:** Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment **Where to Buy:** PlayStation Store **Price:** £11.99

Fun fact – *Bastion* is older than the PlayStation Vita itself, which shows how poorly the handheld console has become. Titles for the Sony handheld are drying up fast, Sony are officially putting less effort in the dying console with first party development ceasing, and more focus put on the development of the PS4. So this leaves the PS Vita with ports of old games and the odd JRPG.

But with *Bastion* it's not a bad port as the indie title is still as good as the first time round. *Bastion* on PlayStation consoles has a significant advantage with Cross-Buy and Cross-Save. Purchasing *Bastion* on the PlayStation Store will not only put the game in your PS Vita library, but also your PS4 library. Cross-Save makes it even better enabling you to carry on your game, on your PS4. Done with your daily commute and want to carry on playing? Load up *Bastion* on your PS4 and pick up where you left off on your PS Vita. You'll want to do that as the PS4 version offers crisper visuals and that big screen experience.

The burning question is: is *Bastion* still good on the PlayStation Vita? The answer is yes – on portable devices the PS Vita offers the true *Bastion* experience compared to the iOS port. Playing on an iPad has a different pacing to it with The Kid shooting automatically

on sight, while you use the touchscreen to dodge enemy fire. While still fun it was a bit intrusive with your hand getting in the way of the action and bullets raining on you from all directions. The PS Vita has a touchscreen on both sides of the device – it's surprising that this option has not been included, but it will not really be missed as the traditional tactile controller is so much more enjoyable.

In *Bastion* you play as The Kid, a survivor of 'The Calamity', waking up on a floating world to find the city of Caelondia fragmented and other worlds surrounding in the same state. Upon awaking The Kid journeys to Bastion, a safe haven for troubled times. The isometric view is still present with you controlling the kid kicking arse with an array of weapons, including samurai swords, hammers and akimbo pistols to name a few. You'll be using them to slay Windbags, Gasfellas and Scumbags in this frantic and colourful game.

Keeping you going is the need to level up, upgrade and pulling off new moves. The gameplay seriously does not get old – this game was made for handhelds. So, a bit weird it's only just made its way to a handheld console.

Adding to the atmosphere is the dulcet tones of Logan Cunningham who plays Rucks the games narrator. Rucks' narration follows you throughout the game and I'll just say this: I could listen to Rucks read out a phone book.

If you haven't already experienced this charming indie title, here's your chance, especially if you've got a PS4. You'll be engrossed by this fragmented world and engaged in gameplay that evidently does not seem to get old.



Hatoful Boyfriend



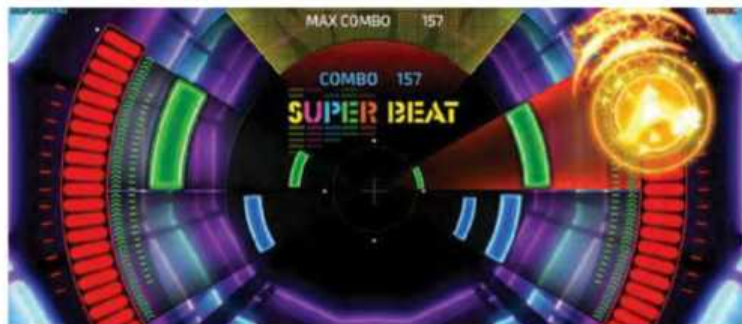
Developer: Mediatonic **Publisher:** Devolver Digital

Where to Buy: PlayStation Store **Price:** £7.99

Another dating sim from the land of dating sims, Japan. Only Japan could make a dating sim – about pigeons – without anyone batting an eyelid. And that's exactly what we have here – a dating sim where you choose pigeons to date. You just need to roll with the absurdity, because it's a well-made game with decent plots and interesting characters.

You play as a human, starting her second year at elite all-bird high school, St. PigeoNation's Institute. Like any dating sim the gameplay revolves around interaction with the other characters. To make it easier for you to develop a relationship with the eight character pigeons, there are human forms of the pigeons on display. Note that they will never change into this form, it's merely there to make it easier for you pick one you fancy, unless you already have a bird fetish and don't mind catching avian flu.

It takes roughly an hour to reach one of the multiple endings of *Hatoful Boyfriend*, depending on your activities in the game, a tie is also possible with two pigeons vying for your affections towards the end. *Hatoful Boyfriend* is short and sweet and if you play intensely for a week you'll be able to see all the endings. But the engaging dialogue and script is what keeps you coming back. Granted, this won't be everyone's cup of tea, but for those slightly interested, keep going and you may just surprise yourself.



Superbeat: Xonic



Developer: Disney Interactive **Publisher:** Lucas Arts

Where to Buy: PlayStation Store **Price:** £7.99

With a variety of rhythm games available for the PS Vita, we're already spoiled by *Persona 4: Dancing All Night* and *Hatsune Miku Project DIVA F*. *Superbeat: Xonic* adds to the list and while *Persona 4: Dancing All Night* will most likely sell better because of its legions of fans, *Superbeat: Xonic* plays better than its *Persona* counterpart and that could be due to the fact that it's in better hands.

Nurijoy are famed for the *DJMax* series, beloved on the PSP and Nurijoy has brought elements of *DJMax* to *Superbeat: Xonic*, which is delightfully welcoming. The game has two different types of control, taking advantage of the PS Vita's touch screen control. The touch screen will get you matching notes with your fingers to the activation ring on-screen. Swipes and scratches are also demanded on higher difficulty. For those that find this too tasking, you can use the traditional controls instead with the buttons mapped out as different notes. The beauty of it all is the ability to mix and match these controls, making the experience really unique, compared to rhythm games outside of the PS Vita.

Like any good rhythm based game, *Superbeat: Xonic* has an excellent track list, especially for western audiences. Don't worry you're not going to hear constant K-Pop. There are songs here you'll recognise and will they will be in your head long after you stop playing.

WHAT MOBILE

BUYER'S GUIDE

Buying a new device can be a difficult decision. Our comprehensive buyer's guide is here to help you.



55 Phone reviews

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Acer Liquid Jade

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £199

www.acer.co.uk

A decent handset from a smaller brand, the Liquid Jade has all the components in place to be a much better handset than it actually is. What holds it back is Acer's lack of polish when compared with bigger brands such as Motorola. The end result is a handset that you could settle for, but probably shouldn't.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 140.5 x 69 x 7.5mm
Weight 110g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A decent low-end handset, but there are too many better alternatives.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Acer Z220

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £50

www.acer.co.uk

The Acer Z220 performs solidly as a communications device but anything extra-curricular is asking too much. Should you decide to purchase one, there are too many add-ons you have to buy externally, which defeats the purpose of a budget phone. If you're looking for a basic device that can connect to the internet, make calls and text, this could be for you.

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor 1.2 GHz Qualcomm MSM8210 Dual-core
Screen 4.0-inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM (8GB), 2GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,

up to 32GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 125.3 x 64 x 9.6 mm
Weight 120g
Battery 1300mAh

VERDICT: A solid budget phone for calls and texts, but that's all it's really good for.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Alcatel One Touch Pop S3

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £80

www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

The Alcatel One Touch POP S3 has its merits, especially taking into account the sub-£100 price of the device. The problem here is that by making room for 4G capability Alcatel has been forced to make cutbacks in crucial areas. However, if you are simply after the option to access faster web browsing and app speeds on the go, then the POP S3 offers you that at the cheapest price possible.

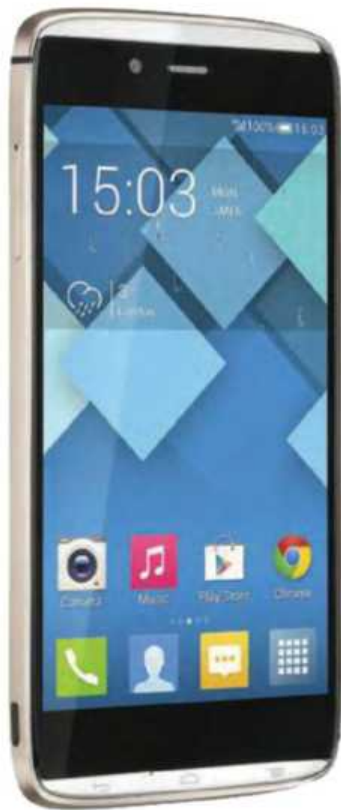
OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123 x 64.4 x 9.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap, sure, but its poor quality renders its 4G capability near pointless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Alcatel One Touch Idol Alpha

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319

www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

While it's good to see manufacturers branching out from the traditional black slab design, the Idol Alpha is a reminder of why the slab works. There are just too many compromises here, and the hardware does not make amends for them. Aside from the fact that Android itself is a powerful operating system that you can tailor to your heart's content, there's very little to redeem this phone.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 138 x 66.6 x 7.5mm
Weight 117.4 g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A decent camera is the only redeeming feature on this overpriced handset.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Alcatel One Touch Idol X+

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £TBC

www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk

We usually greet lesser-known brands with open arms, but never has one disappointed as much as Alcatel with its One Touch Idol X+. Despite decent specs, it's the handset's flaws that hog the limelight. It's outperformed by other handsets in its price bracket in just about every respect. It's hard to envisage anyone patient enough to waste their time with it.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Octa-core 2GHz
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 140.4 x 69.1 x 7.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: With such great competition the One Touch Idol X+ simply looks irrelevant.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Amazon Fire Phone

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £400

When we first learned of the 3D capabilities of the Amazon Fire Phone we thought it might be a gimmick. Instead, it turned out to be the feature we love the most. Its other interface aspects are riddled with hiccups which can add to some severe usability issues. Its design has some questionable choices, too. It has a lot of potential though, and we're eagerly looking forward to a sequel.

OS Android KitKat 4.4
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB
Camera 13MP front-facing,

2.1MP rear-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.2 x 66.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,400 mAh

VERDICT: A promising yet flawed debut effort, recommendable only to the curious.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPhone 5c

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £469 (16GB) £549 (32GB)

If you need a splash of colour in your life and you're already a massive fan of the iOS operating system, then the iPhone 5c is much the same as the previous iPhone 5. There's a slightly upgraded front-facing camera and 4G will work on any UK network, but other than that you're getting the exact same thing. The iPhone 5c is simply around for those of you who love great design without breaking the bank.

OS iOS 7
Processor Dual-core 1.3GHz
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 640 x 1136 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080
Connectivity 4G
Size 12.4 x 59.2 x 9mm
Weight 132g
Battery 1,510 mAh

VERDICT: It's the most colourful iPhone to date, but it's identical to the iPhone 5.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 5s

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £549 (16GB) £629 (32GB) £709 (64GB)

With fingerprint identity, a 64-bit A7 chip and delivering up to twice the performance of the iPhone 4 and 5c, many people will opt to pay the extra £80 or so over the 5c. They'll also get an improved camera with 15 per cent larger sensor and improved low-light capabilities. The True Tone flash incorporates two flashes each matched to different light temperatures so flesh tones are more natural with flash pictures.

OS iOS 7
Processor Dual-core 1.3GHz ARM V8
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 1136 x 640 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing,

1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 123.8 x 58.6 x 7.6mm
Weight 112g
Battery 1,560 mAh

VERDICT: The gold standard in user-friendly smartphones, with a ton of power to boot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 6

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £539
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

Calling it 'the best iPhone ever' almost seems a little redundant. Of course it's better – it's more powerful, has a better camera, and NFC could soon become a huge deal. We're not quite as keen on the aesthetics of it versus older iPhone designs, but it's still got a wonderful premium build and a beautifully sharp display. The option for greatly expanded storage sizes shouldn't be undervalued, either.

OS iOS8
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/64/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138.1 x 67 x 6.9mm
Weight 129g
Battery 1,810 mAh

VERDICT: Bigger and better than ever, just as you'd expect. The definitive iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPhone 6 Plus

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £619
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

It's the iPhone 6, but bigger. That's the only difference, and it comes with all of the ups and downs that you would expect from a phablet. You'll either love or hate the larger screen which, while still beautiful, is slightly less sharp than its little brother's. Similarly it might be tough for smaller hands to hold. But then you do get to see more things on screen at once. It's still a remarkable phone though, make no mistake.

OS iOS8
Processor Apple A8 1.4GHz
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/64GB/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 158.1 x 77.8 x 7.1mm
Weight 172g
Battery 1,810 mAh

VERDICT: A bigger iPhone 6 – it's really that simple. Prefer it or not, it's great regardless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPhone 6s

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £539
www.apple.com/uk/iphone

The iPhone 6s may not offer that much to warrant an immediate upgrade but it still has enough new features to welcome new adopters to the platform. Force Touch genuinely works well and has plenty of future potential, while the hardware and low-light camera improvements make this more than just a simple cash cow.

OS iOS 9
Processor 1.84 GHz Dual Core Apple A9
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1334 x 750 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/64/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 12MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing

Video 4K at 30FPS
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 138 x 67 x 7.1 mm
Weight 143g
Battery 1,712 mAh

VERDICT: Plenty of new features make this another sure-fire hit for Apple.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 50 Helium

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £199
archos.com

If the Moto G and Moto E are the gold standard of entry-level and low-cost smartphones, then the 50 Helium is certainly worthy of silver. It's got a nice big screen as well as invaluable 4G capability. It won't set the world alight, but it's a standout in a market awash with cheap, limited handsets.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE

Dimensions 145 x 71.5 x 8.95mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A capable alternative to the market-leading Moto G.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





BlackBerry Classic

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £330

uk.blackberry.com

BlackBerry diehards will love the modern touchscreen and keyboard – and even some actual apps, just like a proper smartphone. There are certainly worse handsets you could be issued at work. But there's nothing here to tempt an iPhone, Android or Windows user. For almost everyone other than BlackBerry fans, this phone is just a reminder of how far we've moved on in recent years.

OS BlackBerry OS 10.3.1
Processor Dual-core 1.5GHz Krait
Screen 3.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p @ 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 131 x 72.4 x 10.2mm
Weight 177g
Battery 2,515 mAh

VERDICT: Difficult to recommend to all but the most ardent of BlackBerry fans.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



BlackBerry Passport

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £530

uk.blackberry.com

A premium device by anyone's standards – if you can look past the thoroughly odd design. Undeniably BlackBerry's most advanced device ever, it's still clearly angled towards the business crowd with a focus on productivity. The same old BlackBerry problems persist though, with an inferior OS and app store. It's just too impractical and limited for personal use.

OS BlackBerry 10.3
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1440 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Connectivity 4G
Video 1080p
Dimensions 128 x 90.3 x 9.3mm
Weight 194g
Battery 3,450 mAh

VERDICT: Premium build and top specs are betrayed by off-putting, strange design.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



BlackBerry Z30

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £500

uk.blackberry.com

Perhaps if BlackBerry had focused on its efforts on making a phone like this five years ago we would be looking at a very different picture now. As it stands, a barren app store, odd features and a monster price tag may kill what could have been a competitive device. It's still surprisingly easy on the eye though, and its display doesn't look too bad either.

OS BlackBerry 10
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 140.7 x 72 x 9.4
Weight 170g
Battery 2,880 mAh

VERDICT: Possibly the best BlackBerry yet, but that's not saying an awful lot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





BWC Stealth V2

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £300

www.bwcdevices.com

With good specs available at low prices there's never been a better time to pick up a rugged smartphone (if that's what you need). The Stealth V2 lives up to both the 'rugged' and 'smart' tags, with surprisingly capable insides. It also passed all of our stress tests, with countless drops, bashes and drownings failing to leave so much as a mark.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 1GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 133 x 69 x 20mm
Weight 230g
Battery 2,800 mAh

VERDICT: As smart and tough as it promises.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



CAT B100

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380

www.catphones.com

The CAT B100 withstands harsh conditions and jarring blows with a tough outer shell that absorbs the impact of falls, and impressive waterproofing. Beyond that, the phone lacks features games and apps – but chances are that's not why you're buying this phone. If you need a rugged handset to take adventuring, though, it's more than tough enough.

OS Nucleus 2.1
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 2.2 inches
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 50MB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 3MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing
Video QVGA

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 122.94 x 55.88 x 7.6mm
Weight 136g
Battery 1,150 mAh

VERDICT: Tough enough to take into a warzone, if a little light on actual function.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Doro 820 Mini

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £169

www.doro.co.uk

The Doro 820 Mini's software is simple to use; first-time smartphone users and the elderly won't get confused by any cumbersome on-screen options. Unfortunately, this usability has been hampered by hardware problems. A slow processor creates annoying delays when navigating through the phone, while a poor build quality ruins what could have otherwise been a decent budget phone.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Size 125 x 69.5 x 14.95mm
Weight 170g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A rugged phone for those who need to rely on it in any environment.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Doro Liberto 820

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £186

www.doro.co.uk

It's easy to dismiss Doro phones as obsolete. This is to ignore that Doro isn't interested in attracting phone geeks and techno-fashionistas. These phones are for those value simplicity above processing power. Doro targets the 'senior' market. But with its SOS button and useful short cuts the Liberto 820 will appeal to those are not slaves to trends in consumer electronics.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat with Doro Wizard
Processor 1.3Ghz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 940 x 560
Memory 1GB
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 13mm x 71mm
Weight 132g
Battery 1,900 mAh

VERDICT: A surprisingly well-featured phone for the more tech-savvy of seniors.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Doro PhoneEasy 624

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £100

www.doro.co.uk

The PhoneEasy 624 is Doro's best feature phone offering for those who want to keep things as simple, while making sure important contacts are only a button push away. It's got a 3G antenna, lengthy battery life, but a needlessly dire camera.

OS Custom
Processor N/A
Screen 2.4 inches
Resolution 320 x 240 pixels
Memory N/A
Storage N/A
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 2MP
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 102 x 52 x 19mm
Weight 104g
Battery 800 mAh

VERDICT: A well featured phone for the price if you're in the market for that sort of thing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



EE Kestrel

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £99

www.doro.co.uk

The EE Kestrel is the best entry-level 4G handset on the market and this is in no small part due to Huawei. The manufacturer has built a solid handset that consumers will use beyond its 4G-LTE capability. Although, its weak resolution is a major flaw, it has plenty of other positive attributes including a smooth UI, the ability to handle a vast range of games and decent web and app browsing speeds.

OS Android 4.3 (Jelly Bean)
Processor 1.2Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G, 3G
Dimensions 131 x 65.3 x 7.85mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A reliable handset that boasts good usability, if underwhelming specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Google Nexus 6

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £499

www.google.com/nexus/6/

The Nexus 6 is a reminder of exactly what so many manufacturers are doing wrong by overly modifying Android. Google's flagship is a tremendous powerhouse – more of a media hub than a mere smartphone, and one of the best phablets on the market. Whether you'd rather it had a stylus is a matter of preference, though.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 2.7 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.96 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 4K

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 82.98mm x 159.26mm x 10.06mm
Weight 184g
Battery 3,220 mAh

VERDICT: Fast, fresh and tremendously powerful. A dream for Android purists.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Honor 7

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £250

www.hihonor.com/en/pages/products/honor7

The Honor 7 is a solid handset that has the looks and appeal to captivate many buyers. It's got a great screen and impressive camera that has a few unique features up its sleeve. Unfortunately, it also suffers from mixed performance that seems to be a result of the Kirin chipset. If you're a keen mobile gamer, this could be an issue.

OS Android Lollipop v5.0
Processor Kirin 935 (8 cores: 2.2 GHz quad core + 1.5 GHz quad-core)
Screen 5.2-inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB
Storage 16GB/ 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB

Camera 20MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 143 x 72 x 8.5 mm
Weight 157g
Battery 3,100mAh

VERDICT: Great looks and impressive camera but performance could be an issue.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire 626

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £150

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC Desire 626 is a solid handset that performs fine in most areas. Should you decide to purchase one, it will likely serve you very well under most conditions. The only problem arises from the £150 retail price, which puts it squarely in the firing line of budget superstars such as the Vodafone Smart Ultra 6. Had HTC priced it slightly cheaper, it may well have been worth more serious consideration.

OS Android 5.1
Processor 1.2 GHz quad-core Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 512GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 1,080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 147 x 71 x 8.2 mm
Weight 135g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: There are better deals out there. Still, this is a perfectly capable phone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC Desire 816

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £300

www.htc.com/uk

In a market lacking a viable midrange phablet the HTC Desire 816 stands out. It might have its flaws, but for the price you can certainly look past them. If you can't, then a midrange device probably isn't for you. For the rest of us, there's no better option for getting your hands on a jumbo screen on the cheap.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.6GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1.5GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 156.6 x 78.7 x 7.9mm
Weight 165g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: A triumphant, large addition to a fantastic 2014 product line for HTC.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire 820

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £299

www.htc.com/uk

A large display, fantastic cameras and attractive design makes the HTC Desire 820 an ideal choice if you're after an affordable phone with plenty of features. It's only been let down by the fact that it doesn't pack an HD screen and that it doesn't run the latest Android software. It's also quite pricey compared to the OnePlus One; a phone that is a serious rival.

OS Android 4.4.2 KitKat
Processor Quad-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A53
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing

Video 1080p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.7 x 78.7 x 7.7mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2600 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap, attractive and packed full of features.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC Desire Eye

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £365

www.htc.com/uk

While we love the cameras (having a front-facer as highly powered as the rear-facer is a huge boon, particularly for selfie-lovers) the Desire Eye's build quality and price make it a tougher sell than you might think. It does look nice though, and is an interesting concept. Just not a 100% successful one.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 13MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.7 x 73.8 x 8.5mm
Weight 154g
Battery 2,400 mAh

VERDICT: A hard sell when the superior One M8 can now be bought for the same price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC One M8

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £530

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC One M8 is, in all probability, the best smartphone ever made. It both looks and performs better than almost everything else out there. Features like Blinkfeed and knock-to-wake are a joy to use. If Apple, Sony and Samsung weren't paying attention before, they certainly are now.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 4MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.36 x 70.6 x 9.35mm
Weight 160g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: If you can afford it, buy it. There's no better Android handset on the market.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC One M9

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £580

www.htc.com/uk

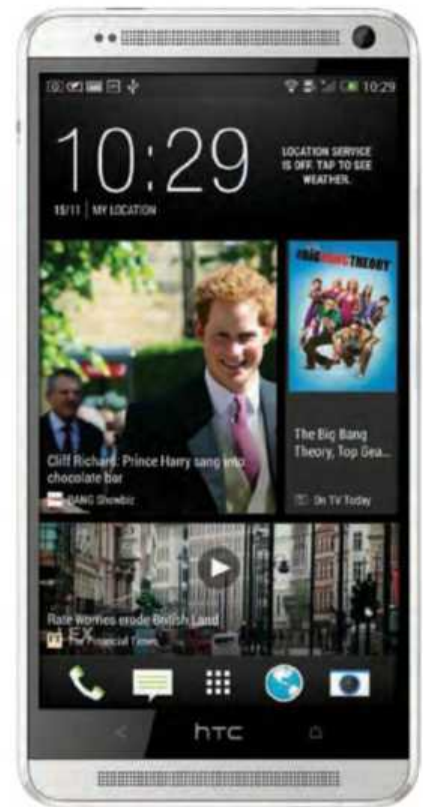
The One M9 is HTC's first major release of 2015 and its top-notch build quality, powerful processor and phenomenal battery life makes it one of our favourite phones of this year. However, it doesn't really provide anything different to what flagship rivals like the iPhone 6 already offers. Despite that, the HTC One M9 is still one of the best looking and most powerful phones on the market.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 4 x 2GHz + 4 x 1.5GHz octa-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 4MP UltraPixel front-facing

Video 4k
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 144.6 x 69.7 x 9.61mm
Weight 157g
Battery 2,840 mAh

VERDICT: It has no unique selling point but it's still one of the best devices out there.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



HTC One Max

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £599

www.htc.com/uk

The HTC One Max piggybacks the reputation of the HTC One, although nothing much has improved. The high-quality display is present but HTC has failed to add processing power and the fingerprint sensor implementation is very disappointing.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.7GHz quad-core
Screen 5.9 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 4MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 164.5 x 82.5 x 10.3mm
Weight 217g
Battery 3,300 mAh

VERDICT: The HTC One's design is still a standout but there's nothing new here.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HTC One Mini 2

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £360

www.htc.com/uk

Your opinion of the One Mini 2 will come down to what you mostly use your phone for. If you don't put too much strain on its struggling processor then you should be fine. It's got a magnificent pair of cameras, and that trademark HTC metal unibody build can't be beat. Day-to-day users will be more than satisfied – hardcore tech-heads should stick with the One M8.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 137.4 x 64 x 10.6mm
Weight 137g
Battery 2,110 mAh

VERDICT: Powered to match its stature, but still a very polished, attractive device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend G7

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £205

www.huaweidevice.co.uk

With a large screen and the gorgeous looks that remind us of the iPhone 6; the Huawei Ascend G7 might look good on the outside but the software is another story. Huawei has redesigned Google's vanilla Android operating system and reskinned it as something that looks both cheap and ugly. Despite that, the Ascend G7 is a decent choice if you want an iPhone 6-lookalike that runs Android software.

OS Android 4.4.2 KitKat
Processor 1.2 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 153.5 x 77.3 x 7.6mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Its great performance is ruined by a cheap and ugly looking operating system.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Ascend P7

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £365

www.huaweidevice.co.uk

The Ascend P7 feels like a missed opportunity. Huawei should have put its full weight into creating a top-level flagship handset. However, its underpowered processor is its only real flaw. It looks premium and its front-facing camera is the best on the market. Its price could be a sticking point, but it's by no means a bad device.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.8GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 139.8 x 68.8 x 6.5mm
Weight 124g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: It's not quite a market-leading flagship but at least it looks the part.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Huawei P8

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £395
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

An attractive device that gives you top-of-the-range specs and a fantastic camera for half the price of the Samsung Galaxy S6 or iPhone. The performance isn't as slick as its major rivals, but that isn't a deal breaker. Especially when the phone costs half the price of the iPhone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S6.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 2 GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16/64GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 144x72x6.4mm
Weight 144g
Battery 2,680 mAh

VERDICT: Flagship specs for half the price of a Galaxy S6 or iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Honor 4x

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £144.99
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

An affordable phone that offers solid battery life and plenty of features. The build quality even feels better than the LG G4, a smartphone that costs double its recommended retail price. Honor isn't a big name over in the West, but phones like the 4X are helping it head in that direction. It's just a shame that the processor is a little on the weak side.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor HiSilicon Kirin 620
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 153x77x8.7mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A solid phone at a bargain price, you'll be surprised at how good it looks.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Huawei Honor 6+

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £299.99
www.huaweidevice.co.uk

If you're after an affordable device with plenty of top-notch features, you can't really go wrong with the Huawei Honor 6+. The camera is unique, the performance is fantastic and battery life is better than more expensive phones. Its slow camera and inability to handle certain apps are only minor negatives – the Honor 6+ is well worth the money.

OS Android KitKat 4.4.2
Processor Kirin octo-core 925
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Camera Dual 8MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 151x76x7.5mm
Weight 165g
Battery 3,600 mAh

VERDICT: A flagship phone with excellent battery life that doesn't break the bank.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Kazam Tornado 348

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £247

www.kazam.mobi

Despite great looks and smooth performance, lack of 4G connectivity and storage makes the Tornado 348 something of a non-starter for serious users. The casual market will be plenty content with what's on offer here – particularly those eye-catching physical dimensions.

OS Android KitKat 4.4
Processor 1.7Ghz octa-core
Screen 4.8 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 139.8 x 67.5 x 5.15mm
Weight 95.5g
Battery 2,050 mAh

VERDICT: Standout design and performance at an attractive price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Kazam Thunder Q4.5

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £TBC

www.kazam.mobi

The Thunder Q4.5 is a sure case of style over substance, but in the lower-cost end of the market you'd usually be lucky to get either. While the phone lacks standout features it won't let you down when it comes to everyday smartphone functionality. If you're in the market and want to try something new, you could certainly do an awful lot worse.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.3Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 854 x 480 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 1.74GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 136 x 64.6 x 8.9mm
Weight 137g
Battery 1,800 mAh

VERDICT: It may be flawed, but at this price point you'd be hard pushed to beat it.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G3

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £499

www.lg.com/uk

Only minor detractors stop the LG G3 from being the perfect smartphone. That said, there's no such thing as the perfect smartphone just yet, so the G3 is still a wonderful piece of kit. It has outstanding features, hardware, and form to boot. The best display around, a monstrous processor and a variety of little touches all make the G3 a special smartphone.

OS Android 4.4 (KitKat)
Processor 2.5Ghz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1440 x 2560 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB or 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 2160p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.3 x 74.6 x 8.9mm
Weight 149g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Want the best? The G3 is absolutely deserving of your consideration.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





LG G4

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £500
www.lg.com/uk

The unique leather design and incredible camera certainly helps the LG G4 stand out against rivals like the iPhone 6. However, the fact it doesn't have the strongest processor on the market, alongside an average battery and awkward button placement, means it doesn't really stand up as a true iPhone and Galaxy smasher.

OS Android 5.1 Lollipop
Processor 1.4GHz quad core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1440 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 149 x 76 x 9.8mm
Weight 155g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A monster device let down by a weak processor. Not a Galaxy S6 killer.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G4c

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £229
www.lg.com/uk

The LG G4c is solidly average, with a few fun gimmicks that don't quite make up for the photo quality. For those who simply want a day-to-day workhorse, it is not a bad option, but it's not for those who are looking for something heavy-duty.

OS Android
Processor Quad-core 1.3 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon
Screen 5.0 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280-pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 1,080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.7 x 69.9 x 10.2 mm
Weight 139g
Battery 2,540 mAh

VERDICT: Solidly average for everyday use, but not for heavy-duty users.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G Flex

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £570
www.lg.com/uk

The curved display may add very little, but with a state-of-the-art spec sheet and a fantastic display, the LG G Flex nails the basics of a high-end smartphone. However the £570 price and so-so camera make it difficult to recommend – at least when compared to its cheaper, better rivals. The Flex just isn't the innovation LG believes it to be.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 160.5 x 81.6 x 7.9mm
Weight 177g
Battery 3,500 mAh

VERDICT: A powerful phone held back by a steep price for an unnecessary gimmick.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





LG Spirit 4G

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £129.99
www.lg.com/uk

At only £129.99, there's little to criticise in this budget mid-range device that looks a lot like a shrunk down LG G4. It has enough performance for most users and comes with Android 5.0 right out of the box. The only problem is the weak front and rear cameras, which distract from an otherwise competent package.

OS Android 5.1 Lollipop
Processor 1.3 Ghz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 133x66x10mm
Weight 124g
Battery 2,100 mAh

VERDICT: A competent mid-range device with Android Lollipop and good specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto E (2015)

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £109
www.motorola.co.uk

Paying £109 for a full-blown, powerful 4G smartphone is seriously good value for money. This value is only increased by a high-quality camera, powerful processor and excellent battery life. The only major faults we found when testing the phone included no LED camera flash, a plastic body that easily picks up marks and a fiddly SIM-card slot.

OS Android 5.0.2 Lollipop
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 410, 1.2 GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 540 X 960 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing,

640 x 480 front-facing
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129.9 x 66.8mm, 146g
Weight 145g
Battery 2,390 mAh

VERDICT: After a smartphone that's seriously good value? This is for you.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G (1st Gen)

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £135
www.motorola.co.uk

The Moto G is a budget smartphone done right. It makes smart and sensible sacrifices to slash its price to a point that puts its rivals to shame. For people who don't demand the highest specs and best camera from a phone, the Moto G's easy-to-use system and fast speeds make it an ideal choice.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 129.9 x 65.9 x 11.6mm
Weight 143g
Battery 2,070 mAh

VERDICT: The best option for customers on a budget.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Motorola Moto G (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £150

www.motorola.co.uk

It's an updated version of the Moto G – nothing more, nothing less. The lack of 4G is extremely disappointing, and a processor upgrade would have been nice. Still, a bigger screen, a better camera and MicroSD compatibility is extremely welcome. When it comes to affordable phones that can actually perform, the Moto G is still untouchable.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm
Weight 149g
Battery 2,070 mAh

VERDICT: A solid improvement on the best, but no 4G gives it a limited shelf life.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G 4G (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £150

www.motorola.co.uk

One of the best value smartphones on the market, the large display, 4G connectivity and latest Android operating software makes it well worth the price. Combine all of this with the phone's fantastic build quality and the Motorola Moto G 4G is well worth keeping after your contract expires.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor Quad-core 1.2 GHz Cortex-A53
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2390 mAh

VERDICT: Priced between £200-£400, this smartphone undermines the competition.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto G (3rd Gen)

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £159

www.motorola.co.uk

Motorola has done it again with another device that punches above its weight and mostly improves on its predecessor. Every area is catered for here, offering impressive battery life, a brilliant camera and adequate performance. If you're looking for a solid Android device that won't break the bank, the Moto G is worth consideration.

OS Android Lollipop v5.1.1
Processor 1.4 GHz Snapdragon 410
Screen 5.0-inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM (8GB), 2GB RAM (16GB)
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible?
Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142 x 72 x 11.6 mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2,470mAh

VERDICT: Solid device that offers perfectly fine performance across the board.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Motorola Moto X (2nd Gen)

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380
www.motorola.co.uk

A rock-solid handset with helpful features. This is the best place to experience Google Now, making voice operation genuinely useful. Mix in a sleek design, great camera and long battery life and the £380 price tag is justified. If you can afford the extra £150 then it makes for a sterling upper-mid tier upgrade to the Motorola Moto G.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129.3 x 65.3 x 10.4mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: For those looking to step up from the budget tier: your search is over.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Motorola Moto X (2014) (1st Gen)

Reviewed: January 2015, price: £420
www.motorola.co.uk

Motorola's original Moto X was a nice idea executed a little too late. Competition from superior phones from manufacturers with a stronger recent track record was too great to overcome. But this latest version makes a much stronger case for your cash. It's got some excellent features and will surely be beloved by fans of stock Android.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 2160p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 140.8 x 72.4 x 10mm
Weight 144g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: The best Motorola ever, and arguably the best Android handset of 2014.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Asha 503

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £70
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Nokia's Asha 503 is a brilliantly tiny handset that stays usable despite the smaller screen. If you want a dirt-cheap phone then you might be better off with a sub-£50 handset and its design is a little spiky. But anyone looking for a phone to keep them busy for five minutes on a bus will find plenty to love here.

OS Nokia Asha platform 1.2
Processor N/A
Screen 3 inches
Resolution 240 x 320 pixels
Memory 128MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing
Video QVGA
Connectivity 3G

Dimensions 102.6 x 60.6 x 12.7mm
Weight 110.2g
Battery 1,200 mAh

VERDICT: A good entry into the budget market that offers more than the basics.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 435

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £40
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

It won't shake the world but for 40 quid you can hardly expect it to. This is a very cheap phone that has all the features you would expect from more expensive handsets. While it doesn't excel in any particular area and the camera is pretty terrible, you'll be lucky if you find anything that performs this well for the price. A genuine bargain.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 800 x 480
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Cameras 2MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 480p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 118 x 65 x 11.7mm
Weight 131g
Battery 1,560 mAh

VERDICT: A bargain-bin handset that still manages to run Windows Phone very well.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 640

Reviewed: August 2015, price: £109.99
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

It's incredible what Microsoft has managed to cram into such a cheap, inconspicuous phone. It has nailed all the major points internally, with a great camera, excellent battery and an adequate processor for the well-optimised Windows Phone OS. The only problem is Windows Phone itself, which still struggles to convince the sceptics.

OS Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G

Dimensions 141 x 72 x 8.8mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,500 mAh

VERDICT: A brilliant battery and solid performance make this a bargain device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 640 XL

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £180
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Although it is more expensive than the 640, you get the advantage of a much bigger screen and some seriously good battery life. The camera has also gotten a bump too, producing some excellent images for this price-point. It's just a shame that the processor hasn't been improved to complement them.

OS Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 157.9 x 81.5 x 9mm
Weight 171g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Not a huge leap up but the camera and battery are worth the money.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 735

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £299
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Microsoft has produced a genuine rival to the bestselling Motorola Moto G in the form of the Lumia 735. With the introduction of an HD display and 4G LTE this is much more than just another selfie phone. But if selfies are what you're after the Lumia 735 offers plenty of fun ways to snap images of you and your friends with its 5-megapixel front camera.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 4.7 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 6.7MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 134.7 x 68.5 x 8.9mm
Weight 134g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: A Windows Phone to match the Moto G, the 735 is a selfie star.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 830

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £267
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Nokia Lumia 830 is not quite the swansong we were hoping for. It's not hugely affordable, and nor does the phone's hardware make full use of that 4G connectivity. Mid-range mobiles seldom convince us of their reason to exist and this final Nokia is no exception. It does look the part, and Cortana is improving, but there are simply better options out there.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 10MP rear-facing, 0.9MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 139.4 x 70.7 x 8.5mm
Weight 150g
Battery 2,200 mAh

VERDICT: Underpowered and overpriced, the Lumia 830 is average and forgettable.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 925

Reviewed: August 2013, price: £479
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

With the Lumia 925 Nokia hasn't set out to reinvent the wheel, it has just built on its past achievements to put together a brilliant phone. A gorgeous slimmed-down design, high performance camera and responsive user interface all set this handset apart from the rest of the Lumia range and make it a top level device in the high-end smartphone market. One of the best out there.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 760
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 129 x 70.6 x 8.5mm
Weight 139g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A fantastic camera, slick design and great user interface make this top dog.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 930

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £420
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The plus side for those looking for something different is that Windows Phone has come along enough now that its mere presence on a handset isn't enough to relegate it completely. The Lumia 930 is the flagship that the range has been crying out for for far too long now, and if you don't mind having a relatively restricted ecosystem then you should have very few issues with it.

OS Windows Phone 8.1
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 137 x 71 x 9.8mm
Weight 167g
Battery 2,420 mAh

VERDICT: The closest to rivalling Android and iOS that Windows Phone has ever come.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 1020

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £639.99
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Lumia 1020 is an ideal smartphone for those of you who don't care about apps and it's perfect if you love to take great pictures. It might not be the slimmest device you can get your hands on but the 1020's powerful camera is well worth the extra bulk.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.5GHz dual-core
Screen 4.5 inches
Resolution 1280 x 760
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 41MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 130.4 x 71.4 x 10.4mm
Weight 158g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: A top smartphone with an astounding camera – one of the best.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Nokia Lumia 1320

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £280
www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

The Lumia 925 and 1020 were large enough, and the lack of software taking advantage of the big display, unlike with the Samsung Galaxy Note, means those extra inches just leave you looking faintly ridiculous when answering a call. You're better off spending your money on an Android phablet or Google's Nexus 5.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels
Memory 1GB
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 164.2 x 85.9 x 9.8mm
Weight 220g
Battery 3,400 mAh

VERDICT: A good phone but the Nexus 5 simply undercuts the competition too well.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 1520

Reviewed: February 2014, **price:** £550

www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/

Although the Nokia Lumia 1520 weighs in at a whopping £550 (SIM-free), it could cost you considerably more to purchase a standalone camera, camcorder, satnav, tablet and a laptop computer that can run Microsoft Office.

OS Windows Phone 8
Processor 2.2GHz quad-core
Screen 6 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G-LTE
Dimensions 162.8 x 85.4 x 8.7mm
Weight 209g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: A great all-in-one device that mashes the best of Nokia together.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



OnePlus One

Reviewed: June 2015, **price:** £269

www.oneplus.net

If you're not bothered about Samsung, Apple or any of the other big brand names, then we highly recommend the OnePlus One. It offers class-leading specs for half the price of an iPhone 6 or Samsung Galaxy S6. That attractive price is topped off by excellent build quality and unlimited customisation options.

OS Cyanogenmod version of Android 4.4
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 801
Screen 5.5 inches Gorilla Glass 3
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes

Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Connectivity 4G, dual-band wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC, GOS antenna
Video 1080 HD
Dimensions 152.9 x 75.9 x 8.9mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3100 mAh

VERDICT: A top-spec smartphone for half the price of the iPhone 6? Yes please!

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



OnePlus Two

Reviewed: November 2015, **price:** £289

www.oneplus.net

With only its second device ever, OnePlus has knocked it out of the park with the OnePlus 2. It has improved a lot on the OnePlus One with the seemingly endless battery life, souped-up specs and, of course, the incredible price.

OS Lollipop v5.1
Processor Quad-core 1.56 GHz and 1.82, Snapdragon 810
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels (401 ppi pixel density)
Memory 4GB RAM
Storage 64GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 13MP rear-facing,

5MP front-facing
Video 2160p@30fps, 720p@120fps
Connectivity 3G & 4G
Dimensions 151.8 x 74.9 x 9.9 mm
Weight 175 g
Battery Non-removable 3300 mAh

VERDICT: A phone so affordable for the specs on offer it would be foolish to pass up.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Panasonic Lumix DMC-CM1

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £799
www.panasonic.com/uk/consumer

This is by no means a cheap device but you most definitely get what you pay for. Considering when it first released, the Panasonic DMC-CM1 had flagship specifications and a true camera sensor to match even the best compact/bridge cameras. Fast forward to now and little has changed; this is still the best camera phone you can get and by quite some distance

OS Android KitKat 4.4.2 (upgradable to 5.0)
Processor 2.3 GHz Snapdragon 801
Screen 4.7-inches
Resolution 1,920 x 1,080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
 up to 128GB
Camera 20MP rear-facing, 1.1MP front-facing
Video 2160p (15fps only)
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 135.4 x 68 x 21.1 mm
Weight 204g
Battery 2,600mAh

VERDICT: If you've got the wallet and pocket space for it, you'll be blown away.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Prestigio MultiPhone 5430

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £190
www.prestigio.com

The Prestigio MultiPhone 5430 is a bland piece of kit that lacks any real highlights, but is undoubtedly a capable and efficient smartphone. Perhaps its best feature is that it gets the core experience right, if not groundbreakingly so. The very basics of what you expect from a smartphone in 2013 are here but there isn't much else.

OS Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich
Processor Intel Atom 1.2GHz
Screen 4.3 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 126 x 64.7 x 10mm
Weight 140g
Battery 2,000 mAh

VERDICT: Perfectly ordinary – but it's positioned as an everyday smartphone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy A7

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £319.99
www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy A7 is an attractive proposition. But looks aren't everything. The cheaper £269 OnePlus One offers more power, a similar screen size and up-to-date software. And the £129 Vodafone Smart 4 Max with a bigger screen is less than half the price. If it's about power, not just looking powerful, perhaps look elsewhere.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.5GHz Quad-core
Screen 5.5-inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 151 x 76.2 x 6.3mm
Weight 141g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: An attractive device but it has less power than similar devices.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Ace 3

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £180

www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy Ace 3 is a good handset that's been made irrelevant by cheaper competition. While it packs a vibrant display and solid specs, similar phones sit well below the £180 benchmark set here. Samsung will have to rethink its pricing. If it weren't for the Moto G's release this would be an emphatic recommendation – unfortunately Samsung will have to settle for the silver medal.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.2GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 121.2 x 62.7 x 9.8mm
Weight 115g
Battery 1,500 mAh

VERDICT: Premium build quality and visuals at a good price – just not a great one.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy K Zoom

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £400

www.samsung.com/uk

We can see what Samsung set out to achieve with the Galaxy K zoom, and creating a solid Android smartphone with an optical zoom is no small feat. However, it looks like a dated digital camera at best – newer devices are much more compact. If you're after a smartphone with a solid snapper, we'd advise you to seek out the LG G3 or Sony Xperia Z2 instead.

OS Android 4.4 (KitKat)
Processor Hexa-core: 1.3GHz quad-core + 1.7GHz dual-core
Screen 4.8 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 8GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 137.5 x 70.8 x 16.6mm
Weight 200g
Battery 2,430 mAh

VERDICT: A decent smartphone and an excellent camera in a hideous body.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note 3

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £649

www.samsung.com/uk

The Note 3 steps over the competition with its large, engulfing display and great battery life, but it's the stylus that's the star of the show here, with great integration that makes it an ideal note-keeping device. This makes it ideal for business people on the move, although they'll have to make sure they keep an eye on the easy-to-lose pen at all times.

OS Android 4.3 Jelly Bean
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP front-facing, 2MP rear-facing
Video 4K

Dimensions 151.2 x 79.2 x 8.3mm
Weight 168g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: A fantastic portable business device with helpful, unique features.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Note 4

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £498

www.samsung.com/uk

This year's effort ensures the Note remains top of the phablet pile, but unless you're particularly taken with the stylus and split-screen app combo, you shouldn't discount the latest flagship phones. The LG G3 and new Motorola Moto X are stunning devices, only slightly smaller in size and power. Unless you've got a thing for faux leather, that is, in which case the Note 4 is the best gadget ever made.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.7GHz quad-core
Screen 5.7 inches
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560-pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 3.7MP front-facing

Video 2160p at 30fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 153.5 x 78.6 x 8.5mm
Weight 176g
Battery 3,220 mAh

VERDICT: Still king of the phablets, but not by such a distance this time around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Note Edge

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £610

www.samsung.com/uk

The Samsung Galaxy Note Edge points to an exciting future when we no longer have to accept that a smartphone screen has to be rectangular. As is often the case with a new technology, though, it needs more work. As cool as the edge looks, it serves little purpose, other than to make this a more expensive Note 4. Call us when the screen wraps all the way around, Samsung.

OS Android 4.4.4 KitKat
Processor Quad-core
Screen 5.6-inches
Resolution 1,600 x 2,560 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing,

3.7MP front-facing
Video 4K @ 60fps
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 151.3 x 82.4 x 8.3mm
Weight 174g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: A worthwhile endeavour – for Samsung's engineers, not the consumer.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S3 Mini

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £300

www.samsung.com/uk

Something of a misnomer, this is no relation to its bigger brother, the S III, despite the design similarities. The Mini is little more than a shrunk down Galaxy S II. If users want a budget Galaxy, they are better off pursuing that (former) flagship on a budget plan – this is extortionately expensive for what you get.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor 1GHz dual-core
Screen 4 inches
Resolution 480 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8/16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions: 121.6 x 63 x 9.9mm
Weight 111.5g
Battery 1,500 mAh

VERDICT: A cheeky move by Samsung to pass this off as a premium device. It's not.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy S4

Reviewed: July 2012, price: £550

www.samsung.com/uk

An impressive hardware offering with intriguing new software and camera features but these need to be perfected and integrated into the device as a whole before the S4 can really be called a knock out. While the phone's processor seemed to struggle with games and the design is pretty similar to the S3, this is a solid offering from Samsung in the flagship race.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
CPU 1.6 GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Cameras 13MP front-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 136.6 x 69.8 x 7.9mm
Weight 130g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: An impressive offering with interesting but not integrated new software.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S4 Active

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £400

www.samsung.com/uk

The Active S4 is ideal for people looking for a more protected smartphone, although it does make some sacrifices. Its design is too rugged for mainstream appeal and its display and camera aren't great. But it's a great hybrid for an underwater camera and is perfect for adventurous lifestyles.

OS Android 4.2.2 Jelly Bean
Processor 1.9 GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 139.7 x 71.3 x 9.1mm
Weight 151g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: It may not be quite as good as its big brother, but it certainly has its purpose.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £530

www.samsung.com/uk

The thing about Galaxy handsets is that their flaws are often matters of personal opinion. If you don't mind the samey design, plasticky build and irksome user interface, then the Galaxy S5 could be the best smartphone going. It's insanely powerful, has a blinding display and is even waterproof. If you care about substance over style then the Galaxy S5 is as good as it gets.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.1 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 16MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G LTE
Dimensions 142mm x 72.5mm x 8.1mm
Weight 145g
Battery 2,800 mAh

VERDICT: Behind a cheap-looking build lies the beastliest smartphone around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy S6 edge

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £760

www.samsung.com/uk

This is currently one of the best looking smartphones on the market. That dual-curved screen makes the iPhone 6 Plus and HTC One M9 look boring in comparison. An insanely fast camera and superb performance means that the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge isn't just about looks either.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor octa-core Samsung Exynos 7420
Screen 5.1-inches
Resolution 1,440 x 2,560
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 64GB/128GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 16MP rear-facing 5MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142.11 x 70.1 x 7mm
Weight 132g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: A phone that grabs attention with both its looks and performance.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z1

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £475

www.sonymobile.com

It's a little on the large side, but Sony's latest handset is rock solid, with powerful hardware and a unique design. Fans of the company will be right at home with the software that stores movies, music and games you've bought across other platforms. Add in a great camera and you've got a phone that stops just short of best in class.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Snapdragon 800 quad-core 2.2GHz
Screen 1080 x 1920 pixels, 5 inches
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB expandable up to 64GB via MicroSD
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports MicroSD, microUSB
Battery 3000 mAh
Dimensions 144 x 74 x 8.5mm
Weight 170g

VERDICT: Software makes it great for Sony fans, hardware makes it good for the rest

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z1 Compact

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £449

www.sonymobile.com

If you hate giant displays and don't have the patience for Apple's iOS and its restrictive App Store, the Sony Xperia Z1 Compact is your only choice, and a great one at that. Sony has done well to make a phone with the power to rival the mighty iPhone in an equally small package. In-built Sony-branded apps such as Walkman and PlayStation is an inherent plus, too. Fingers crossed for a KitKat 4.4 upgrade soon.

OS Android 4.3
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800
Screen 4.3-inch HD Triluminos
Resolution 720 x 1,280 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 16GB, expandable to 64GB

Camera 20.7MP Exmor RS
Video 720p
Connectivity Wi-Fi, 3G, 4G, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC
Dimensions 127 x 64.9 x 9.5mm
Weight 137g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: The most powerful, best looking compact Android available. Simple.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Sony Xperia Z2

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £579

www.sonymobile.com

The Z2 matches its rivals' power and usability. A lack of design innovation and similar specs might deter Z1 owners from upgrading, though, and the large size might not appeal to fans of smaller devices. That said, superior imaging and a powerful processor and CPU means it excels in the right places.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1080 x 1920 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146.8 x 73.3 x 8.2mm
Weight 163g
Battery 3,200 mAh

VERDICT: An immaculate smartphone, if only a small step up from its predecessor.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z3

Reviewed: December 2014, price: £549

www.sonymobile.com

We were all a little bit surprised when Sony elected to release a new flagship a matter of months after the Xperia Z2 hit shelves. After reviewing it though, the company's reasoning is obvious. The Z3 is a true flagship as worthy of your attention (and cash) as any other in this Buyer's Guide. The Z3 has premium design, hugely powerful internals and an array of neat features. A very impressive device.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.2 inches
Resolution 1,920 x 1,080 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 146 x 72 x 7.3mm
Weight 152g
Battery 3,100 mAh

VERDICT: Sony's best full-sized offering yet, although the camera is aging a little now.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z3 Compact

Reviewed: December 14, price: £429

www.sonymobile.com

The Xperia Z3 Compact is indisputably the most powerful compact Android ever made. We can't really slight it for anything, and no other Android phone in its size bracket can come close to matching it. It's remarkable that Sony has managed to squeeze almost the exact same technology from the Z3 into a smaller body. Finally, Android power-users have a valid option in the sub-five inch display category.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.5GHz quad-core
Screen 4.6 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 720 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Camera 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 4K
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 127 x 64.9 x 8.6mm
Weight 129g
Battery 2,600 mAh

VERDICT: The definitive small-sized Android smartphone. The most powerful yet.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Vodafone Smart 4 Max

Reviewed: July 2015, **price:** £129.99

www.vodafone.co.uk

If you crave a 6-inch 4G phablet for the equivalent of £2.50 a week over a year the Smart 4 Max is the only game in town. Purists will sneer at its elderly processor, low-res screen and lack of 'Lollipop'. You'll be the one with around £400 more in your bank account. Just bear in mind it can only connect to Vodafone 4G network and you can't remove the Vodafone embedded software.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Snapdragon MSM8926
Screen 6-inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 164 x 83.4 x 7.9mm

Weight 170g
Battery 3,800 mAh

VERDICT: A great price makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart 4 Power

Reviewed: February 2015, **price:** £79

www.vodafone.co.uk

The benchmark scores of a £79 phone were never going to impress anyone: the Smart 4 Power is not a handset for playing the latest taxing games on. That said, it's enough to deliver on the advantages of 4G. If instant information rather than instant gratification is what you're after, this phone delivers for the price.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing
Video 720p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 141 x 71.4 x 9.5mm
Weight 162g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Poor specs distract from what is an ergonomic and capable 4G starter.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Ultra 6

Reviewed: September 2015, **price:** £125

www.vodafone.co.uk

Packing a fast processor, excellent screen and plenty of battery life, you'll be hard-pressed to find a rival phone which offers quite this much for the money. Even the camera is pretty good, offering full manual controls and a high megapixel count. If you're after a true bargain Android device and are happy to forgo the big brands, this is well worth a look.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor 1.5GHz quad-core
Screen 5.5 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Video 1080p 30fps

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 154 x 77 x 8.4mm
Weight 159g
Battery 3,000 mAh

VERDICT: Excellent specs and great battery life make this seriously good value.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Wileyfox Swift

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £129

www.wileyfox.com

A good budget handset that struggles to stand out from the crowd, the Wileyfox Swift faces stiff competition from the likes of Motorola. Punch-for-punch, it has features to match similar handsets but the difficulty of being an entirely new brand will make it hard to claw loyal fans away from other devices.

OS Android (Cyanogen 12.1)	Connectivity Dual-SIM, 4G
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core	Dimensions 141.15mm x 71mm x 9.37mm
Screen 5.0 inches	Weight 135g
Resolution 1280 x 720 pixels	Battery 2,500 mAh
Memory 2GB RAM	
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes	
Camera 13MP rear-facing	
Video 1080p at 30fps	

VERDICT: A solid performer that can't quite make itself stand out from the rest.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



YeZZ Andy A5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £207

www.sayyezz.com

Camera phone fans on a tight budget should definitely seek out the Andy A5 for its affordable price and high-quality camera. If taking photos is not that important to you then you'll probably have seen the uninspired design and bland features a million times before.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)	Weight 106g
Processor Quad-core 1.2GHz	Battery 2,000 mAh
Screen 5 inches	
Resolution 540 x 960 pixels	
Memory 512MB RAM	
Camera 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
Connectivity 3G, wi-fi	
Dimensions 144.1 x 73.5 x 8.6mm	

VERDICT: A great camera but the rest struggles against more bullish counterparts.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



YotaPhone 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £549

www.yotaphone.com/gb-en/

The YotaPhone 2 fixes almost all of the original's flaws, and turns the rear E Ink display from an impractical cherry on top, to one of the phone's main ingredients. There's no denying this quirky conversation-starter is for a niche audience, and a rich one at that. We can't wait to see what the YotaPhone 3 will bring – not least a price drop for this model.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	2.1MP front-facing
Processor Quad-core 2.3GHz Krait 400	Video 1080p
Screen 5 inches	Connectivity 4G
Resolution 1,080 x 1,920 pixels	Dimensions 144 x 69.5 x 8.9mm
Memory 2GB RAM	Weight 145g
Storage 32GB	Battery 2,500 mAh
MicroSD compatible? No	
Camera 8MP rear-facing,	

VERDICT: If you're constantly reading on the go this is the best new smartphone in years.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





ZTE Blade Vec 4G

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £153

www.ztedevices.co.uk

Once you've fixed all the software customisations present on the Vec 4G, you're left with a pretty respectable performer for the price. The large, sharp display does a great job of quickly rendering web pages over 4G. Unfortunately, the Vec 4G battery's small capacity and demanding hardware mean you'll often find the phone emptied by the end of the day. It also has storage issues – namely no SD card slot.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.2GHz quad-core
Screen 5 inches
Resolution 720 x 1280
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 142.3 x 70.4 x 7.8mm
Weight 155g
Battery 2,300 mAh

VERDICT: Solid specs for 4G at a reasonable price, but there are better options out there.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



ZTE Blade V

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £99.99

www.ztedevices.co.uk

A fantastic price makes the ZTE Blade V easy to recommend for first-time buyers. Anyone hoping to get the most out of a smartphone's apps and snaps should look elsewhere, but if you don't want to worry about a phone for the kids being broken or stolen, then this is for you.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor Snapdragon S4 Play
Screen 480 x 800, 4 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 4GB
Camera 5MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 126 x 64 x 10.9mm

Weight 130g
Battery 1,800 mAh

VERDICT: A great prices makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



ZTE Blade S6

Reviewed: August 2015 price: £169.99

www.ztedevices.co.uk

The ZTE Blade S6 is definitely more than just a cheap iPhone 6 rip off. A decent camera helps it stand out from the rest of the mid-range crowd, while performance is surprisingly decent for a phone of this price. It's let down by poor build quality and software that lacks certain features. The price is the most attractive, however, and those negatives shouldn't put you off this decent mid-range phone.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Processor Snapdragon 615
Screen 5-inches
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Camera 13MP
Video Yes
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 144 x 70.7 x 7.7mm
Weight 154g

VERDICT: An affordable phone with surprisingly decent performance.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Amazon Kindle Fire HD 8.9"

Reviewed: May 2013, price: £229/259

www.amazon.co.uk

A good looking e-reader with tablet capabilities, limited by Amazon's annoying operating system and app eco-system, and an annoyingly slow browser. This device will doubtless be a commercial success, with its branding and ease of use, but for the more serious user there are much better tablets out there.

Dimensions 240 x 164 x 8.8mm
OS Customized Android 4.0
Screen 8.9 inch IPS LCD capacitive touchscreen
Resolution 1920 x 1200, 254 ppi
Processor TI OMAP 4470 dual-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A9
GPU PowerVR SGX544
RAM 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
Cameras front facing 1.3MP with 720p video
Wireless 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band
Ports USB 2.0, 3.5mm audio jacks, Bluetooth A2DP
Battery life 10 hours (accurate)

VERDICT: A solid, functional tablet that is limited by its Amazon associations.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Acer Iconia Tab 8

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £140

www.amazon.co.uk

Acer has managed to do what manufacturers of every cheap tablet should aspire to: create a tablet that is priced extremely competitively, but which performs to a standard much higher than you'd expect for its cost. A few compromises have been made along the way, but this is still a budget slab that's well worth considering.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 800 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 32GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 720p
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 215 x 130 x 8.5mm
Weight 360g
Battery 4,600 mAh

VERDICT: It has a few flaws, but for less than £150 you should look past them.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Advent Vega Tegra Note 7

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £140

www.nvidia.co.uk

It's a contender, alright. Aside from some clunky desing issues, the Advent Vega Tegra Note 7 is a powerful and punchy little machine. If you're after a compact and affordable tablet its speed sets it aside from its rivals as a device that's great for gaming, customising images and browsing the web.

OS Android Jelly Bean 4.3
Processor Nvidia Tegra 4
Screen 7 inches
Resolution 1,280 x 800 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16GB
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 119 x 199 x 9.6mm
Weight 320g
Battery 8 hours

VERDICT: Its speed sets it apart from its competition. A cheap and capable device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Amazon Kindle Fire HDX

Reviewed: January 2014, price: £199-329
www.amazon.co.uk/kindle

The Kindle Fire HDX is around £100 more than the Fire but the improved screen and processor justifies the extra cost. The real human Help feature will be a boon to tablet newbies; experienced users will regard it as a gimmick. The HDX is a top-rate device – but if you're not a regular Amazon customer you're better off with a Nexus.

OS Amazon customised Android OS, v4.1.2
Screen 1902 x 1200 pixels, 7 inches
Processor Snapdragon 800 2.2GHz quad-core
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16/ 32/64GB versions available
Camera 8MP front-facing
Video 720HD
Wireless Wi-fi (optional Vodafone 4G version)
Ports microUSB
Dimensions 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9mm
Weight 302g

VERDICT: A significant update to the Fire and ideal for Amazon users.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPad Mini

Reviewed: December 2012, price: £269
www.apple.com/uk

The iPad Mini represents Apple playing it safe, which is to say: disappointing. This is little more than an iPad 2, with all its limitations – a low-res screen and weak processor power – shrunk down to an odd 7.9-inch size. It is also overpriced, the Google Nexus 7 offers superior performance for £100 less. Despite its luxurious design, you really are paying for little more than 4G support and Apple's App Store. Average.

OS iOS 6.0.1
Screen 7.9-inch LED-backlit IPS LCD
Resolution 768 x 1024 pixels at 162 pixels per inch
Input Capacitive touchscreen
CPU Apple A5 1GHz dual core
GPU PowerVR SGX543MP2
Memory 512MB
Storage 16/32/64GB
Camera 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing
Video 1920x1080 (1080P HD) at 30fps. Video stabilised
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports 3.5mm audio jack, Apple Lightning port (USB 2.0)
Size 200 x 134.7 x 7.2mm
Weight 308g

VERDICT: Little more than a shrunk iPad 2 with 4G. Disappointing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Apple iPad 3

Reviewed: April 2012, price: £399
www.apple.com/uk

The new iPad boasts the highest-resolution display of any tablet, as well as an improved 5MP camera and better connectivity. Not to mention a high-powered new processor which makes it the most powerful iPad ever, too. Though some may resist the upgrade path, the unrivalled Retina display is a subtle but deeply appealing feature that will become more and more desirable. The new iPad is by far the best tablet around

OS iOS 5
Screen 9.7-inch TFT
Resolution 1536 x 2048 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Processor 1GHz Cortex-A9
Memory 1GB
Storage 16/32/64GB
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing
Flash No
Video 1080p HD
Wireless 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0
Ports 3.5mm audio jack, proprietary Apple connector
Standby time 720 hours
Use time 9 hours
Size 241 x 186 x 9mm
Weight 662g

VERDICT: There's simply no contest – the new iPad is the best tablet in the world.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Apple iPad 4

Reviewed: January 2013, price: £399

www.apple.com/uk

A rather cheeky move by Apple to release the iPad 4 (or 'iPad with Retina Display') just months after the iPad 3. All it really adds is a new processor (the iPhone 5's A6X) and Apple's new lightning connector. However, this means it remains as the best tablet money can buy – and Apple's App Store and its 300,000 dedicated tablet apps only make the proposition more enticing.

OS iOS 6.0.1,
Screen 9.7 inch LED
Resolution 1536 x 2048 pixels at 264 ppi pixel density
CPU Apple A6X, Dual-core
GPU PowerVR SGX554MP4,
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 16/32/64GB storage
Camera 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing

Video 1080P HD at 30fps
Wireless Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, Bluetooth 4.0
Cellular 4G, 3G, 2G
Ports Lightning Connector (USB2.0) and 3.5mm audio jack,
Dimensions 241.2 x 185.7 x 9.4mm
Weight 662 g

VERDICT: The best tablet money can buy.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 79 Platinum

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £150

www.archos.com

With so many budget tablets to choose from the Archos 79 Platinum has no features or unique selling points to attract the consumer in a saturated market. Its hardware is woefully underpowered, its features are bog standard and it is at least £10 too expensive. Its attractive looks are not enough to redeem it. The bottom line is that it should have never been conceived.

OS Android 4.2 Jelly Bean
Processor Quad-core A9 1.6GHz
Screen 7.85 inches
Resolution 1024 x 768 pixels
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB
Camera 2MP rear-facing
Connectivity Wi-fi, Bluetooth
Dimensions 201 x 137 x 8mm

Weight 366g
Battery Lithium Polymer

VERDICT: There is no reason you ever would, or should, buy it. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Archos 101 XS 2

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.archos.com

A couple of years ago, the 101 XS would have had us singing Archos' praises, but by today's standards its processing power and screen quality fall short. It might, though, find a home with users limited to spending £250 on a 10-inch tablet

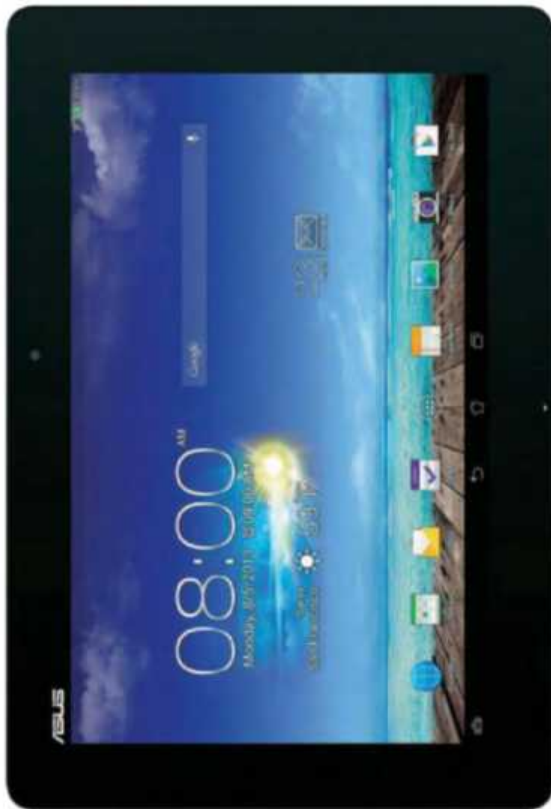
OS Android 4.2.2
Screen 10.1-inch/1,280 x 800 pixels
Camera 2MP rear, 2MP front
Video Record/playback
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack
Memory 16GB expandable via MicroSD
Dimensions 273 x 169 x

10.1mm (tablet),
273 x 169 x 5mm (keyboard)
Weight 636g (tablet), 200g (keyboard)

VERDICT: A great price is let down by a poor screen and cheap build.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Asus Transformer Pad TF701T

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £429
www.asus.com

The Asus Transformer Pad TF701T packs a beautiful screen and the keyboard dock is well thought out. But dated software and the threat of a Google Nexus 10 sequel make this a niche device. Do you really need a keyboard? The iPad mini begs to differ.

OS Android 4.3 (via an over-the-air update)
Screen 10.1 inch/2,560 x 1,600 pixels
Input Capacitive touchscreen
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video Record/playback
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack

Memory 32/64GB
Battery Tablet 31Wh, dock 16Wh

VERDICT: It packs fast hardware but can't compete with the iPad Air or Nexus range

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Google Nexus 9

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319
www.google.co.uk/nexus

The Google Nexus 9 is an impressive and welcome return to the tablet market for HTC, and a jewel of a gadget for Android 5.0 to debut on. The size is right, and if you know for sure you want an Android tablet, it's your best bet – it's certainly the best slate HTC has ever made – but for the money we'd still go for the quality build and thriving eco-system of an iPad.

OS Android 5.0 Lollipop
Screen 8.9-inch
Resolution 2048 x 1536 pixels
Processor Tegra K1 2.3GHz
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB/32GB internal
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing
Flash No
Video 1080p HD

Dimensions 153.68mm x 228.25mm x 7.95mm
Weight 425g
Battery 6,700 mAh

VERDICT: The best tablet on the market – if you insist on Android, that is.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Google Nexus 10

Reviewed: February 2013, price: £319
www.google.co.uk/nexus

Finally, the Android tablet everyone's been waiting for – except Apple. This is a tablet that can go head to head with the best in the Apple iPad stable – it has a powerful processor, a Retina Display quality screen, the latest version of Android. Along with the Nexus 7, this is the best tablet Android users can buy. The only flaws are an uninspired body, and a dearth of tablet specific apps.

OS Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)
Dimensions 263.9 x 177.6 x 8.9mm, 603g
Screen 10 inch
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Input Super PLS TFT capacitive touch-screen
CPU Exynos 5, Dual-core ARM Cortex-A15
RAM 2GB

Cameras 5MP (main), 1.9MP (front)
Wireless Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
NFC Android Beam
Storage 16GB/32GB
Connectivity Micro USB, Micro HDMI, 3.5mm headphone jack
Battery 9,000 mAh

VERDICT: The best Android tablet of 2013 slips behind the iPad only due to apps.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





HP Slate 7

Reviewed: October 2013, price: £125

www.hp.com

The steel frame makes the Slate 7 an impressive sight and its audio uses Beats technology to great effect. The fantastic price will help it to undercut some of its rivals, though the slow processor and low quality camera keep it from besting them elsewhere.

OS Android 4.1 Jelly Bean
Processor Dual-core 1.6 GHz Cortex-A9
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7.0 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB expandable to 32GB via SD card
Camera 3.15MP pixel rear-facing, VGA front-facing

Video 720p
Dimensions 197.1 x 116.1 x 10.7mm
Weight 372 g
Battery non-removable, 5h media time

VERDICT: Great audio and build, but corners have been cut to keep costs down.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Lenovo ThinkPad 8

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £424

www.lenovo.com

If you just want a device for general tasks then you can find better alternatives within Lenovo's Yoga range of Android slates, and elsewhere. If you're a fan of Windows and in search of a bulkier device that offers plenty of productivity tools, then the ThinkPad is an (almost) viable option.

OS Windows 8.1
Processor 2.4GHz quad-core
Screen 8.3 inches
Resolution 1200 x 1920 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing

Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 8.83 x 5.2 x 0.35 inches
Weight 439g

VERDICT: Even with so few Windows tablets available the ThinkPad still fails to stand out.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Lenovo Miix 2

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £255

www.microsoft.com/surface

With solid performance across the board, frequently usable built-in apps and compact size the Miix 2 is a small but surprisingly versatile slate. Despite the limitations that come with the Windows OS, it performs general tasks well and, for the price, won't let you down. With 3G capability you can even connect to the internet on the move. Overall, it offers plenty of pleasant surprises to combat the weaknesses of its OS.

OS Windows 8.1
Processor 1.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8 inches
Resolution 1280 x 800 pixels
Memory 2GB
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 3G
Dimensions 8.3 x 215.6 x 131mm
Weight 350g
Battery 4,730 mAh

VERDICT: A small but substantial Windows offering that still trails its Android rivals.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £249
www.lenovo.com

Lenovo certainly deserves credit for trying to break the 'black slab' mould. It's an interesting attempt at something different, but unless you have a real need to hang it up from the ceiling or to perch it upright on a train table every day its mediocre internals and display don't represent that much value for money.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat	Video 720p
Processor 1.86GHz quad-core	Connectivity 4G optional
Screen 10.1inches	Dimensions 255 x 183 x 7.2mm
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels	Weight 619g
Memory 2GB RAM	Battery 9,600 mAh
Storage 16GB	
MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB	
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing	

VERDICT: A nice idea, but one we don't fully buy into. Not quite up to scratch.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Microsoft Surface 2 Pro

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £720
www.microsoft.com/surface

We can't fault Microsoft's ambition for the powerful Surface Pro 2 to become your all-in-one portable work and play device. It's got a great display and solid hardware but a lack of dedicated apps, software compromises and stiff – cheaper – competition make it a tough sell.

OS Windows 8.1	256GB/512GB
Screen 10.6 inches/1920 x 1080 pixels	Battery 48Wh
Input Capacitive touchscreen	
Camera 720p resolution front and rear	
Video Record/playback	
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack	
Memory 64GB/128GB/	

VERDICT: Price holds back what is an otherwise excellent work/play hybrid.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



Microsoft Surface Pro 3

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £640
www.microsoft.com/surface

From software to hardware and even design, the Surface Pro 3 is a wonderful piece of kit. It's refreshing to come across a tablet with grander ideals than the norm, challenging us to rethink the notion of the medium. For most people this could genuinely replace their laptop. It's just a shame, and an almost inexcusable mistake, that the keyboard which is so integral to its function is sold as an expensive extra.

OS Windows 8.1	MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 128GB
Processor 1.5GHz Intel core i3/2.9GHz Intel core i5/3.7GHz Intel core i7	Camera 5MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
Screen 12 inches	Video 1080p
Resolution 2160 x 1440 pixels	Connectivity Wi-fi only
Memory 4/8GB RAM	Dimensions 292.1mm x 201.4mm x 9.1mm
Storage 64GB/128GB/256GB/512GB	Weight 800g
	Battery 42Wh

VERDICT: The first tablet with enough function to conceivably replace a laptop.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





Nokia Lumia 2520

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £399

www.nokia.com

The Windows-run Lumia 2520 is a decent first effort from Nokia – and it's certainly one of the more attractive and solid pieces of tablet hardware on the market. It has a few issues with the weight and a lackluster camera but overall we have no trouble recommending this to Windows 8.1 and Lumia fans.

OS Windows 8.1
Screen 10.1 inches, 1920 x 1080 pixels, 218PPI
Processor Qualcomm Snapdragon 800
Memory 2GB
Camera 6.7MP with Carl Zeiss lens
Audio Music player/3.5mm jack

Dimensions 168 x 267 x 8.9mm, 615g
Battery 8120 mAh

VERDICT: A rock-solid first effort from Nokia in this market with powerful specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 Kids

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.nokia.com

The Tab 3 Kids is surprisingly robust, with a solid camera, great battery, fantastic educational apps and software to suit kids. But the premium design doesn't feel like it was meant to be enjoyed by young users and we'd suggest going with a company that specialises in the market rather than one that's testing it out.

OS Android 4.1
Processor Dual-core 1.2GHz
Screen 600 x 1024 pixels, 7 inches
Memory 1GB RAM
Storage 8GB/16GB, expandable up to 64GB
Camera 3.15MP (back), 1.3MP (front)
Video 720p@30fps

Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 3.0
Ports micro-USB, MicroSD
Dimensions 188 x 111.1 x 9.9mm
Weight 306g
Battery Li-Ion 4,000 mAh

VERDICT: A little too premium for the market it is aimed at.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Tab S

Reviewed: October 2014, price: £319

www.samsung.com/uk

While the Tab S may not be a radical departure from other Android tablets, it encompasses everything that is great about a top-notch Samsung product. It's enough to rebuild the Korean giant's brand image, and proof that the company can still surprise us with a fantastic all-round product.

OS Android 4.4 Kit Kat
Processor 2.3GHz quad-core
Screen 8.4 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 16GB, 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p

Connectivity 4G
Dimensions 125.6 x 212.8 x 6.6mm
Weight 294g
Battery 4,900 mAh

VERDICT: Simply put, it's the best Android tablet on the market.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Samsung Galaxy Note Pro 12.2

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £649

www.samsung.com/uk

One of the biggest displays ever seen on a tablet – at no detriment to quality. Combine that with solid design and a super powerful processor to run loads of unique applications and the NotePRO 12.2 is arguably the best tablet on the market. It's certainly the best Android slate, although it's definitely priced as such.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor Octa-core (1.9GHz + 1.3GHz quad)
Screen 12.2 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600 pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB/64GB
Camera 8MP rear/2MP front-facing
Video 1,080p Full HD
Connectivity Wi-fi only
Dimensions 295.6 x 204 x 7.95mm
Weight 750g
Battery 9,500 mAh

VERDICT: Big, beautiful, functional and priced to match. Android's finest.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Sony Xperia Z4 Tablet

Reviewed: October 2015, price: £499

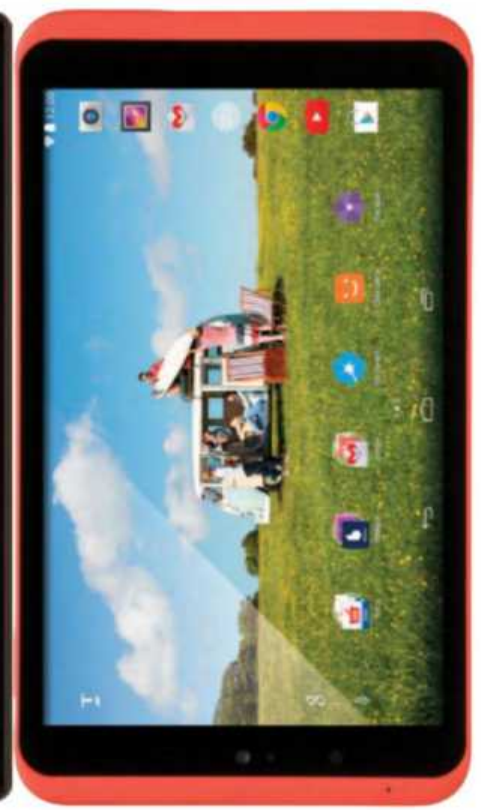
www.sony.co.uk

The Sony Xperia Z4 is a beautifully engineered tablet with more than enough power to run even the most demanding app smoothly. Unfortunately, while slimline and lightweight, its listed price of £499.00 is surprisingly high for its provided specifications. Powerful but pricey.

OS Android 5.0 (Lollipop)
Processor Octa-core 2.0 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 810, 64 bit
Screen 10.1 inches
Resolution 2560 x 1600-pixels
Memory 3GB RAM
Storage 32GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes,
 up to 128GB
Camera 8.1MP rear-facing, 5.1MP front-facing
Video 1080p
Connectivity 4G, Wi-Fi
Dimensions 167 x 254 x 6.1 mm
Weight 393g
Battery 6,000 mAh

VERDICT: Beautifully engineered, slimline tablet but pricey considering specification.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★



Tesco Hudl 2

Reviewed: January 2015, price: £129

www.tesco.com/direct/hudl

This is no Tesco Value attempt at a tablet. Make no mistake, the Hudl 2 is a fantastic Android slate that's great value for money. Sure, it's not on the cutting edge like Google's Nexus series of devices, but if all you want is a gadget to casually surf the web, watch some films or read a few comics, this device is every bit as capable as an iPad Mini.

OS Android 4.4 KitKat
Processor 1.83GHz quad-core
Screen 8.3 inches
Resolution 1920 x 1200 pixels
Memory 2GB RAM
Storage 16GB
MicroSD compatible? Yes
Camera 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing
Video 720p at 30fps
Connectivity Wi-fi
Dimensions 224 x 128 x 9mm
Weight 410g
Battery 4,900 mAh

VERDICT: Don't be fooled – Tesco is now a serious contender in the tablet space.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
 FEATURES ★★★★★
 USABILITY ★★★★★
 DESIGN ★★★★★





Toshiba Excite Pure

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250

www.toshiba.co.uk

The Toshiba Excite Pure's £250 price is attractive but its display is far too faded. It means apps and the like don't look very good. It might appeal to families looking for a cheap way to keep the kids entertained but little else. Even so, the slow processor and useless apps force us to recommend you look elsewhere.

OS Android v4.2 (Jelly Bean)

Processor Nvidia Tegra 3

Memory 1GB

Storage 16GB

Screen 1280 x 800 pixels, 10.1 inches

Video HD

Audio Stereo

Dimensions 261.6 x 177.8 x 10.2mm

VERDICT: It's got a cheap price tag but the poor display and tech shows why.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Tab 4G

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £125

www.vodafone.co.uk

Attractive, cheap and feature-packed; the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G looks more upmarket than its affordable £125 pricing suggests. It's let down by a slow processor, but that shouldn't put you off what is basically well-designed and ideal family tablet.

OS Android KitKat 4.4

Processor 1.2 GHz Quad-Core

Screen 8.0-inches

Resolution 1280 x 800-pixels

Memory 1GB RAM

Storage 8GB

MicroSD compatible? Yes, up to 64GB

Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Connectivity GSM/EDGE/3G/4G/HSPA+/LTE
Dimensions 209 x 128 x 7.99mm

Weight 309g

Battery 4060 mAh

VERDICT: An affordable and easy-to-use tablet that offers something for everyone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vodafone Smart Tab 6

Reviewed: September 2015, price: £150

www.vodafone.co.uk

The Smart Tab 6 is definitely cheap but we'd suggest looking elsewhere for a good budget tablet. The screen isn't that great and performance can't quite keep up with more intensive tasks and games. It has a large battery and the build quality is definitely better than the price suggests, but these points aren't enough to redeem what is an average tablet at best.

OS Android 5.0.2 Lollipop

Processor Quad-core 1.3GHz

Screen 1280 x 800 pixels, 9.6 inches

Memory 1GB RAM

Storage 16GB, expandable up to 32GB

Camera 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing

Video 720p

Wireless WiFi, Bluetooth 4.1

Ports micro-USB, MicroSD

Dimensions 146 x 244 x 7.9mm

Weight 406g

Battery Li-Ion 4,600 mAh

VERDICT: Cheap but not quite good enough to worry the competition.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★





Asus ZenWatch

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £204
www.asus.com/uk

The Asus ZenWatch is handsome enough, but fails to stand out from the crowd of Android Wear devices. Google's wearable OS still feels like a solution in search of a problem – unless you have a specific use in mind for its features you may want to hold out for the next generation of devices.

OS Android Wear
Processor Snapdragon 400 1.2GHz
Screen 1.63 inches
Resolution 320 x 320 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? No

Camera N/A
Video N/A
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 51 x 39.9 x 9.4mm
Weight 75g
Battery 369mAh

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Nike+ Fuelband SE

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £89
www.nike.com

The Nike+ FuelBand SE is close to being the perfect sports tracker. It's social capabilities combined with its numerous features to keep you motivated ensure that it will be a permanent mainstay in any gym addict's kit bag. You might not be so keen on wearing it every single day, though, with its appealing design being more clearly tailored to a casual setting. Plus, its lack of waterproofing could be a deal-breaker for some.

OS N/A
Processor N/A
Screen N/A
Resolution N/A

Memory N/A
Storage N/A
Camera N/A

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Vector Smartwatch

Reviewed: November 2015, price: £80
www.vectorwatch.com

An ambitious attempt to inject some much-needed class into the smartwatch. It's beautiful. But the level of interactivity is minimal and its software lacking. Ultimately, we came away wondering what a Pebble Time with Vector's hardware and battery life might be like. We can only hope this becomes just that, but the company has a long road to travel first.

OS Custom
Storage No
MicroSD compatible? No
Camera No
Video No

Connectivity Bluetooth LE
Dimensions 44 x 44 x 11mm
Weight 142g
Battery 30 days

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



LG G Watch R

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £180.00
www.jawbone.com

The LG G Watch R may be one of the most mature-looking smartwatches yet, but not everyone will find it attractive – or appreciate Android Wear's limitations. The market's set to explode with the advent of the Apple Watch and the Pebble Time. Unless you're desperate for what the LG G Watch R does right now, it's hard to see the value in yet another second-generation Android Wear watch.

OS Android Wear
Processor Snapdragon 400 1.2GHz
Screen 1.3 inches
Resolution 320 x 320 pixels
Memory 512MB RAM
Storage 4GB
MicroSD compatible? No

Camera No
Video No
Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0
Dimensions 46.4 x 53.6 x 9.7mm
Weight 62g
Battery 410mAh

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★
USABILITY ★★★★★
DESIGN ★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Gear 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £250
www.samsung.com

The design needs a rethink but the Samsung Galaxy Gear 2 provides decent fitness tracking features and a good music player. Trimming down on other functions, however, would have made for a slimmer and sleeker product. It would be unfair to say this is a needless addition as it packs a lot of functions, but it's an expensive product

Display 1.63-inch Super AMOLED (320 x 320)

Dimensions 36.9 x 58.4 x 10.0mm, 68g

Processor 1GHz dual-core

Memory 512MB + 4GB storage

Battery 300mAh; 2 to 3 days'

average usage

Connectivity Bluetooth 4.0, IR

Water resistance Rated IP67

Camera 2MP, 720p, 30fps video

OS Tizen-based OS

PERFORMANCE

FEATURES

USABILITY

DESIGN

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★



Fitbit Flex

Reviewed: August 2014, price: £79.99
www.fitbit.com

Minor niggles aside, the Fitbit Flex is possibly the best fitness wearable on the market. Its features are so diverse, and its app so beautiful and intuitive, that it can be tailored to just about anyone's lifestyle. With interchangeable bands in a variety of colours, and a low price, the Flex is practically a must-buy.

OS N/A

Processor N/A

Screen N/A

Resolution N/A

Memory N/A

Storage N/A

Camera N/A

PERFORMANCE

FEATURES

USABILITY

DESIGN

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★



Microsoft Band 2

Reviewed: January 2016, price: £199
http://www.microsoftstore.com/

Microsoft really believes that wearables are the future. It has banked quite heavily on fitness devices with lots of sensors and the Band 2 is its next iteration of this. Retailing at £199, it is by no means cheap but offers more sensors than any other device currently on the market. The main question is, has it solved the issues that plagued the original?

OS Custom Windows Phone OS

Number of sensors 11

Processor N/A

Screen 1.26 x 0.50 inches

Resolution 320 x 128 pixels

Memory N/A

Storage N/A

Connectivity Bluetooth

Dimensions 159 x 78 x 7.3 mm

Weight N/A

Battery 48 hours

PERFORMANCE

FEATURES

USABILITY

DESIGN

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy Gear S2

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £649
www.samsung.com/uk

The Gear S2 Classic is a device you'll definitely wear daily and won't be bored of any time soon. But Samsung needs to make due on its promise of apps to establish itself as king of the wearables. That said, Samsung has provided us with an excellent smartwatch that is arguably the best on the market.

OS Tizen

Processor Exynos 3250

Screen 1.2 inches

Resolution 360 x 360 pixels

Memory 512MB

Storage 4GB

MicroSD compatible? No

Connectivity Wi-Fi

Dimensions 43.6 x 39.9 x 11.4 mm

Weight 42g

Battery 250 mAh

PERFORMANCE

FEATURES

USABILITY

DESIGN

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★



Wearable compatibility guide



LG
G Watch R



Pebble
Watch



Samsung
Gear Live



Sony
Smartwatch 3



Garmin
Vivofit



Archos
Activity Tracker



iPhone
6 / 6 plus



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One M8



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